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ABSTRACT

This report describes the Jobs-Plus approach, an attempt to transform low-work, high-welfare public housing developments into high-work, low-welfare communities. It highlights the rationale of the approach, the way the demonstration has been set up to test the approach in the field, and what has been accomplished so far by the seven cities chosen to design and implement Jobs-Plus at the local level. Chapter 1 provides the context by discussing the problem of concentrated joblessness in inner cities and public housing and the growing policy interest in creating a better mix of income groups within public housing by increasing residents' employment. Chapter 2 discusses the three components of Jobs-Plus (employment-related activities and support services, financial incentives to work, and community support for work) and why they were considered important to achieving the program's goals. Chapter 3 describes the characteristics of the housing developments where Jobs-Plus is operating and how and why the cities they are in were selected for the demonstration. Chapters 4-5 discuss the sites' early practices and experiences, first in building the local partnerships that were to design and operate Jobs-Plus and then in crafting the program's three main components to fit local conditions. Interspersed throughout chapter 5 are profiles of each site's emerging Jobs-Plus program. Chapter 5 ends with a note on the next steps in the study. Appendixes summarize the overall research plan for evaluating Jobs-Plus. Contain 47 references. (YLB)

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JOBSPLUS

Mobilizing Public Housing Communities for Work

ORIGINS AND EARLY ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE JOBS-PLUS DEMONSTRATION

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JOBS-PLUS

Mobilizing Public Housing Communities for Work

ORIGINS AND EARLY ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE JOBS-PLUS DEMONSTRATION

SEPTEMBER 1999

James A. Riccio

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Contents

Preface v

Acknowledgments vii

Executive Summary ES-1

1. Why Jobs-Plus? 1
   - Introduction 1
   - Concentrated Poverty and Joblessness 2
   - Joblessness in Public Housing 4
   - Creating High-Employment, Mixed-Income Public Housing 5
   - The Broader Relevance of Jobs-Plus 6

2. Formulating the Jobs-Plus Approach 9
   - Lessons from Welfare-to-Work and Job Training Evaluations 9
   - Taking Heed of Community-Building Principles 10
   - A Three-Component, Saturation-Level Intervention 12
   - Beyond a Single System: Collaboration and Local Control 13

3. The Sites: Why Were They Selected and What Are They Like? 16
   - The Selection Criteria 16
   - Choosing from a Large Pool of Interested Cities 17
   - The Settings 18
   - Diverse Populations 19
   - Technical Assistance on Collaboration and Program Design 23

4. Building Local Collaboratives and Program Infrastructures: Early Experiences 26
   - Building Collaboratives: A Work in Progress 26
   - Building an Infrastructure for Jobs-Plus: Funding, Staffing, and Space 32

5. Services, Incentives, and Supports for Work: Emerging Visions and Practices 35
   - Employment-Related Activities and Services 35
   - Financial Incentives: Making Work Pay 47
   - Community Support for Work 52
   - Next Steps 55

Appendix. Evaluating Jobs-Plus 56
The Program's Implementation and the Role of Collaboration 56
The Effectiveness of Jobs-Plus 57

Exhibits
The National Partners for Jobs-Plus 1
The Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 5
The Jobs-Plus Approach 13
The Jobs-Plus Timeline 17
Cities in the Jobs-Plus Demonstration 18
Characteristics of Census Tracts of Jobs-Plus Developments in 1990 19
The Jobs-Plus Developments 20
Selected Characteristics of Household Heads and Households Living in Jobs-Plus Developments in 1997 22
Income Sources of Households in Jobs-Plus Developments in 1996 23
The Jobs-Plus Collaboratives 26
Typical Jobs-Plus Staff Positions 33
The Tubman Group: A Resident-Operated Training Enterprise 41
Computing After-Rent Net Income 47
Jobs-Plus Financial Incentives 51
A Few Ways to Strengthen Social Networks to Support Work 53
The Design of the Jobs-Plus Impact Analysis 58

Program Profiles
Baltimore (Gilmor Homes) 36
Chattanooga (Harriet Tubman Homes) 38
Cleveland (Woodhill Homes Estates) 40
Dayton (DeSoto Bass Courts) 42
Los Angeles (Imperial Courts and William Mead Homes) 44
St. Paul (Mt. Airy Homes) 46
Seattle (Rainier Vista) 48

References 59

Recent Publications on MDRC Projects 61

Preface

In 1994, The Rockefeller Foundation and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) invited the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) to join them in developing a new kind of employment program for people living in very poor communities. Out of these early conversations emerged the Jobs-Plus Community Revitalization Initiative for Public Housing Families, a research demonstration project now operating in seven cities across the country. This report is the first in a series to be issued over the next few years describing that program and assessing its accomplishments.

The goal established for Jobs-Plus was deliberately ambitious: to transform urban public housing developments where few people worked into communities in which most did so. The program would use a combination of strategies. It would incorporate the best practices of effective welfare-to-work and job training programs, but add to them a set of new financial incentives and social supports for work. It would also attempt to reach *all* working-age residents of the participating housing developments. Of course, there were no assurances that this approach would succeed — or even be feasible to implement. Recognizing the importance of testing Jobs-Plus in the field, and also seeing the broad learning opportunities such a test would offer, the funders made a comprehensive evaluation central to the demonstration's mission from the start.

The Rockefeller Foundation's interest in Jobs-Plus grew out of its earlier work as a leading sponsor of innovative community-building initiatives in inner-city neighborhoods. It wanted to learn whether a community initiative in which *employment* was the central goal and driving force could have transformative effects on poor neighborhoods. HUD's involvement was prompted by the growing pressure on policymakers to reverse a worsening trend that saw many urban public housing developments slipping into deeper poverty and despair. HUD's interest was intensified by a concern (shared by many others) that, in the absence of special help, new federal and state policies imposing time limits and other restrictions on cash welfare might leave many residents with less income out of which to pay their rent — and at a time when funds for federal housing subsidies that could make up for any losses in rental income were tightly constrained.

Other important public and private funders joined this national partnership, bringing to it not just funding but also important insights and guidance. These included the James Irvine Foundation, Joyce Foundation, Northwest Area Foundation, Surdna Foundation, Inc., and Annie E. Casey Foundation. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has provided resources for the research, and the U.S. Department of Labor for site operations.

MDRC is pleased to be managing this demonstration and evaluating the program. Advancing knowledge about effective community interventions is a relatively new focus for our organization, and we have benefited enormously from the guidance of all these national partners.

Much gratitude is owed to the institutional

partners and residents who have come together in each of the seven participating cities to design and operate a Jobs-Plus program that makes sense for their community. For more than two years, they have worked hard, and they remain impressively committed to this bold new venture. Collaborative decisionmaking is never easy or quick, but as we watch the Jobs-Plus programs come to life, the fruits of those labors are becoming evident. Whether or not the local partnerships succeed in achieving the project's ambitious employment and community change goals, their willingness to experiment with new approaches and to subject their efforts to the close scrutiny of careful research will contribute enormously to this attempt to improve the economic and other conditions in some of our nation's poorest communities.

Judith M. Gueron
President

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MANY people participated in shaping this report. Particular thanks are due the Jobs-Plus staff, residents, and other members of the collaboratives in each of the demonstration's sites. They gave generously of their time and insights to help us understand the early experiences of this challenging project. Major thanks and credit are also due Julia Lopez, Aida Rodriguez, and Chet Hewitt of The Rockefeller Foundation and former HUD staff Michael Stegman, Margery A. Turner, and Paul Leonard for their intellectual leadership and active role in formulating many of the ideas and the knowledge-building agenda underlying the demonstration. The Rockefeller Foundation staff have also played instrumental advisory roles during the operational phase. Current HUD Deputy Assistant Secretary Xavier de Souza Briggs has contributed enormously to the project. Our ongoing contact and project officer at HUD since the project's inception, Garland E. Allen, has been a constant source of assistance and wise advice — and a pleasure to work with.

Local Jobs-Plus staff who reviewed and critiqued earlier drafts include: Deborah Brown, Bertrand Cooper, Monique Daviss, Joanne MacDonald, David Sabir, Peter Whitt, and Wanda Woodward. Valuable feedback was also provided by MDRC operations staff and field researchers: Joyce King Gerren, Daniel Grulich, Edward McDonald, Seanna Melchior, Marilyn Price, Olis Simmons-Hewitt, and especially Maxine Bailey, whose many ideas and creative contributions to Jobs-Plus, starting when she served as a co-director of the demonstration, are reflected in these pages.

Mary Valmont helped coordinate collection of the information on which this report is based, working with MDRC field researchers Darlene Conley, Crystal Dunson, Jim Fraser, Earl Johnson, Linda Kaljee, Ed Liebow, George Mitchell, Theresa Myadze, and especially Linda Persse, who prepared early drafts of some sections.

At MDRC, Judith Gueron, Gordon Berlin, David Butler, Craig Howard, John Wallace, Howard Bloom, and Susan Bloom offered many valuable suggestions on earlier versions. Gail Quets helped collect information for and write the program profiles in Chapter 5. Jennifer Dodge and Seble Tareke assisted the production of the report in numerous ways such as preparing tables and figures and verifying the accuracy of the information on which the report is based.

Judith Greissman edited the document, and Stephanie Cowell helped prepare it for publication. Ed Rowe and his colleagues at Rowe Design Group designed the text and cover.

The entire effort has required the commitment of the Jobs-Plus funders. They are acknowledged by name in the Preface and at the front of the report.

The Author

Executive Summary

THE last few decades have seen many urban public housing developments caught in a downward spiral of increasing joblessness and poverty. Reversing those trends and fostering a mix of income groups within public housing have become important national policy goals, as reflected in the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998. Achieving these goals may be critical for making public housing communities better places in which to live, and for ensuring the economic viability of public housing itself. Some observers fear that new time limits and other restrictions on access to welfare benefits will leave many residents less able to pay their rent, and that constraints on federal operating subsidies to local public housing authorities will make it harder for those authorities to fill the gap left by declining rent revenues.

One way to increase employment rates in public housing is to encourage working families to move into those developments. However, the quality of the housing stock and negative public stereotypes about life inside the developments may deter many such families from applying. And if more working families do move in, non-working families who may be in greater need of housing assistance will have less access to it. Another approach is to try to increase employment among people who already live in public housing or arrive there without steady jobs. The Jobs-Plus Community Revitalization Initiative for Public Housing Families, a national research demonstration project, was created to test one way of implementing that approach. Although Jobs-Plus focuses on public housing, the problems it addresses and its methods of addressing them make the demonstration relevant also to the broader challenges of neighborhood revitalization, welfare reform, and poverty alleviation — particularly the project's efforts to help harder-to-employ low-income people find, keep, and advance in jobs.

The demonstration is sponsored by a national consortium of federal agencies and private foundations: the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Rockefeller Foundation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, James Irvine Foundation, Joyce Foundation, Northwest Area Foundation, Surdna Foundation, Inc., U.S. Department of Labor, and Annie E. Casey Foundation. It is being managed by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC), which is providing technical assistance to the participating cities and evaluating the program. The cities were selected in 1997, and the evaluation is slated to conclude in 2003.

This report is the first in a series of documents that will examine the operation and effectiveness of Jobs-Plus.

A MULTIFACETED, "SATURATION-LEVEL" INTERVENTION

The goal of Jobs-Plus is ambitious: to transform low-work, high-welfare public housing developments into high-work, low-welfare communities. Key to its approach are three main program components:

- **Employment-related activities and services,** including pre- and post-employment activities such as job search, education, training, job development, and case management, and support services such as child care and transportation assistance;

- **Enhanced financial incentives to work,** notably, reducing the amount by which rent increases when earnings grow; and

- **A "community support for work" component,** such as fostering work-related information-sharing, peer support, and mutual aid among residents and with people living outside public housing.

Jobs-Plus is distinctive in combining these components and targeting them toward *all* working-age residents. It is hoped that "saturating" a housing development with services, incentives, and social supports will result in a substantial majority of working-age residents becoming steadily employed.

A DIVERSE SET OF SITES

Jobs-Plus is currently operating in eight public housing developments in seven cities, which were selected in March 1997 from 50 that were invited to apply for the demonstration. These developments are places where, at the time of site selection, steady work was uncommon, reliance on welfare was high, poverty was widespread, and living conditions were difficult. Four of the eight developments (in Baltimore, Chattanooga, Cleveland, and Dayton) are populated almost exclusively by African-American families. Two developments (in St. Paul and Seattle) are populated heavily by immigrant families, particularly from Southeast Asia but also from East Africa (in the case of Seattle). One development (in Los Angeles) is predominantly Hispanic but also houses a sizable minority of Southeast Asians, and one (also in Los Angeles) is predominantly African-American with a substantial representation of Hispanics. Most of these developments are located in very-high-poverty census tracts. The diversity of populations across the eight developments and the combination of large and mid-size cities with different labor markets and housing markets provide an opportunity to test the feasibility and effectiveness of Jobs-Plus under a range of local conditions.

BETTING ON NEW LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

Detailed specification of the program's main features was left to local community partnerships — referred to in this demonstration as "collaboratives." The demonstration's sponsors hoped that a partnership approach would produce a much better conceived and implemented program than if the housing authority or any

other local entity took on this challenge alone. Moreover, it was believed that funding Jobs-Plus's services, incentives, and supports for work at saturation levels and sustaining the program after the demonstration ends would take more resources than housing authorities alone could provide.

With these concerns in mind, the local collaboratives were required to include among their partners the two mainstream institutions through which most public dollars for employment and training activities flow into local communities: the welfare system and the workforce development system (represented by the local Job Training Partnership Act, or JTPA, agency). These two systems could contribute much-needed resources but also provide valuable expertise in operating large-scale welfare-to-work and job training programs, which would complement the housing authorities' experience in working with residents. It was anticipated, moreover, that the opportunity to work with the housing authority would appeal to welfare and JTPA agencies as one way to address the growing demands on them to reach and serve better those low-income people who have the most difficult time getting and keeping jobs, many of whom can be found living in urban public housing developments.

Residents were also considered essential to any local partnership for Jobs-Plus. They could bring an in-depth understanding of the resident population, insights into what program approaches would appeal to residents, and an informal but powerful authority to elicit broad resident support for and participation in (or opposition to) the program.

Finally, the sites were encouraged to include a variety of other local organizations that could contribute resources or expertise of value in helping the program achieve its employment goals, such as local employment and training providers, educational institutions, community-based organizations, local foundations, and business or employer associations.

EARLY PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES IN BUILDING COLLABORATIVES

All seven cities in the demonstration were successful in bringing these important public institutions into a new partnership with residents. They recruited other partners as well. At the same time, the Jobs-Plus collaboratives, like most such enterprises, have suffered significant "growing pains." It has not been easy to develop procedures for governing the collaboratives and sharing authority, define roles for the different partners, integrate or coordinate services across agencies, and, in general, jointly make the decisions necessary to get a Jobs-Plus program up and running. However, substantial progress has been made on all these fronts, and all major partners have remained committed to the demonstration as it enters its third year. It is too early to tell whether the collaborative approach will live up to expectations, and this question will be a continuing area of inquiry as the demonstration unfolds.

IMPLEMENTING THE JOBS-PLUS COMPONENTS

By mid-1999, Jobs-Plus had become a highly visible presence in each of the eight hous-

ing developments. On-site office space to accommodate staff and a number of program activities has been constructed in converted housing units, community centers, or other facilities, and most staff positions have been filled. These positions typically include a project director, who manages the program on a day-to-day basis; case managers, who guide and monitor residents' efforts to prepare for, look for, and keep jobs; job developers, who establish relationships between employers and Jobs-Plus and help locate job openings; and resident outreach workers (also called community organizers), who help spread the word about Jobs-Plus to other residents and get them involved in the program.

All sites have launched *employment and training activities* that generally encourage residents to take jobs as quickly as feasible. Consistent with that goal, they offer instruction (often on site) in job search techniques and basic work habits and norms. Opportunities are also available for residents to acquire job training and to improve their basic education skills. On-site employment resource centers or learning centers have been opened at all developments, usually with computer stations and Internet connections to online databanks listing job openings. In addition to computer-assisted job search instruction, these centers typically offer some training in basic computer literacy (for example, word-processing programs and use of the Internet) and access to computer-assisted basic education instruction. Some sites are placing a special emphasis on helping residents facing substance abuse problems deal with those problems and prepare for work. Progress has also been made in establishing referral networks for off-site job preparation, training, and work experience. Improving residents' access to transportation and child care is a core feature of Jobs-Plus everywhere.

Sites' plans for *financial work incentives* are nearing completion. These primarily take the form of changes in rent rules to reduce the degree to which rent rises as earnings grow. The particular approaches differ across the sites: Some sites are reducing the proportion of "countable" income that must be paid in rent — traditionally, 30 percent; others are disregarding a portion of residents' earnings before applying the 30 percent charge; and still others favor a flat rent approach that keeps a family's rent the same if its income increases. St. Paul has already begun to implement the first phase of its rent reduction plan; all other sites expect to do so by the end of 1999.

Progress has been slowest in defining and implementing a *community support for work* component. Peer support groups that focus on employment issues have already been formed in some sites as one step in this direction. Involving residents in the provision of services and outreach to other residents is another common strategy. With the design and implementation of the two other components of Jobs-Plus further along, the sites are now turning more attention to ways of broadening and deepening their community support for work efforts.

Although the sites are still designing and implementing some features of their Jobs-Plus programs, all have been serving residents and placing residents into jobs. The sites report that, by the end of March 1999, they had enrolled nearly 1,200 residents in Jobs-Plus and had placed more than 400 in jobs.

LOOKING AHEAD

As Jobs-Plus research findings accumulate over the coming years, they are expected to offer lessons relevant to the continuing national debate over how to increase employment and improve living conditions in public housing. But the findings may also be relevant well beyond the public housing arena. In particular, lessons on how partnerships that were formed around an employment agenda fared; on the feasibility of providing services, incentives, and supports for work at saturation levels within a community; on how to work with a very disadvantaged population; and on the effects of a multifaceted saturation strategy on employment and quality-of-life outcomes may all have broader applicability. They may help to generate ideas worth testing in other types of community employment initiatives in inner-city neighborhoods, and may point to strategies worth trying even in mainstream welfare-to-work and job training programs struggling to help harder-to-employ low-income people find and keep work and advance toward better-quality jobs. The demonstration is slated to run until mid-2003, when MDRC will issue a final evaluation report assessing the program's implementation, costs, and effectiveness.

Chapter 1

Why Jobs-Plus?

THE Jobs-Plus demonstration was created to test a new response to concentrated joblessness in parts of urban America. It focuses on public housing, but the problems it addresses and the methods it uses make the demonstration relevant also to the broader challenges of neighborhood revitalization, welfare reform, and poverty alleviation.

INTRODUCTION

When fully implemented, this experimental program will offer an innovative package of employment and training services, financial incentives to encourage work, and community supports for work to residents in selected public housing developments where steady work was uncommon, reliance on welfare was high, poverty was widespread, and living conditions were difficult. Moreover, it will operate on a "saturation" level, attempting to reach *all* employment-age residents. Its goal is unusually ambitious: to produce dramatic improvements in a variety of employment outcomes, with the hope that a better quality of life for residents will follow. This multifaceted, "saturation-level" intervention will strive not only to help nonworking residents find jobs, but also to help those working inconsistently to move into more stable employment and those in low-paying jobs to advance to better-paying positions. The program is being designed, operated, and carefully evaluated as part of a national research demonstration in seven cities (sites): Baltimore, Chattanooga, Cleveland, Dayton, Los Angeles, St. Paul, and Seattle.

A national partnership

The origins of the demonstration date back to 1994, when The Rockefeller Foundation and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) invited the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC) to join them in developing a new project that would attempt to increase employment among residents of low-work, high-welfare public housing developments. Other public and private funders subsequently joined the national partnership (see below) for what is formally known as the Jobs-Plus Community Revitalization Initiative for Public Housing Families.[1] MDRC is responsible for managing the demonstration, providing technical assistance to the sites, and evaluating the program.

THE NATIONAL PARTNERS FOR JOBS-PLUS

Private Foundations

The Rockefeller Foundation
The James Irvine Foundation
The Joyce Foundation
Northwest Area Foundation
Surdna Foundation, Inc.
The Annie E. Casey Foundation

Federal Agencies

Department of Housing and Urban Development
Department of Health and Human Services
Department of Labor

Demonstration Manager and Evaluator

MDRC

1. Jobs-Plus was authorized by Congress as part of the Moving to Work demonstration program in the April 1996 HUD Appropriation bill.

About this report

This report is largely about the potential of Jobs-Plus. It describes the Jobs-Plus approach, the rationale behind it, and the way the demonstration has been set up to test that approach in the field. It also highlights what has been accomplished so far by the seven cities chosen to design and implement Jobs-Plus at the local level. In most community initiatives, moving from concept to reality is a slow and difficult process, and Jobs-Plus is no exception. As this report will show, much has been achieved to date, but there is a good distance yet to travel to realize the program's potential.

This chapter provides a context for the report by discussing the problem of concentrated joblessness in inner cities and public housing, and the growing policy interest in creating a better mix of income groups within public housing by increasing residents' employment. Chapter 2 discusses the main features of Jobs-Plus and why they were considered important to achieving the program's goals. Chapter 3 describes the characteristics of the housing developments where Jobs-Plus is operating and how and why the cities they are in were selected for the demonstration. Chapters 4 and 5 discuss the sites' early practices and experiences, first in building the local partnerships that were to design and operate Jobs-Plus, and then in crafting the program's three main components to fit local conditions. Interspersed throughout Chapter 5 are profiles of each site's emerging Jobs-Plus program. Chapter 5 ends with a note on the next steps in the study, including the other reports planned for the coming year. The overall research plan for evaluating Jobs-Plus is summarized in the Appendix.

CONCENTRATED POVERTY AND JOBLESSNESS

Paul Jargowsky opens his recent book, *Poverty and Place*, with a sobering but instantly recognizable observation:

> Every large city in the United States, whether economically vibrant or withering, has areas of extreme poverty, physical decay, and increasing abandonment. Most city residents will go to great lengths to avoid living, working, or even driving through these areas.[2]

William Julius Wilson, in his widely cited book *When Work Disappears*, writes that "for the first time in the twentieth century most adults in many inner-city ghetto neighborhoods are not working in a typical week," adding that "the current levels of joblessness in some neighborhoods are unprecedented."[3]

Even in good economic times, large cities across America include neighborhoods plagued by stubbornly high rates of joblessness and marginal employment, as William Dickens of the Brookings Institution makes clear: "With national unemployment rates around 5 percent, it is not uncommon to find neighborhoods where unemployment rates exceed 25 percent."[4]

The concentration of poverty has worsened in recent decades, with the number of high-poverty neighborhoods more than doubling between 1970 and 1990.[5] Most immediately affected by this phe-

2. Jargowsky, 1997, p. 1.

3. Wilson, 1996, p. xiii.

4. Dickens, 1999, p. 381. A recent study by HUD reports that 17 percent of central cities in larger metropolitan areas have unemployment rates 50 percent or more above the national unemployment rate, and that in 1995, 32 percent had poverty rates of 20 percent or more (HUD, 1999).

5. Jargowsky, 1997, p. 30. Some researchers, including Jargowsky, define "high-poverty" neighborhoods or census tracts as those in which at least 40 percent of the population are poor. Others, such as Wilson (1996) and Turner (1998), set this threshold at 30 percent.

nomenon are members of racial and ethnic minority groups, especially African-Americans. For example, African-Americans make up about 13 percent of the U.S. population but account for more than half the population of high-poverty census tracts.[6] They also account for two-thirds of the population of urban census tracts where employment rates are lowest.[7]

Studies cite a host of external factors believed to have contributed to the spread of area-based poverty (although scholars continue to debate their relative importance). These include the decline of well-paying manufacturing jobs in the inner city; the concentration of job growth in suburban areas not well linked to poorer communities by public transportation; the inadequate skills and preparation of inner-city residents for many of the new and better-paying service industry jobs; the flight of middle-class residents from center cities to the suburbs, leaving behind a poorer segment of the population; and the continuing legacy of racial discrimination, which restricts housing choices outside inner-city neighborhoods for minority group members.[8]

Concentrated poverty brings with it a host of other social problems. These include high rates of single parenthood and family break-up, lower rates of high school completion, poor job skills, higher rates of reliance on welfare, and higher rates of drug use, violence, and other crimes. Poor-quality schools, health care, and other services can compound these problems. Overall, the quality of life in high-poverty areas is harsh, and not solely in economic terms.

A growing body of literature suggests that living in high-poverty neighborhoods may contribute to worse social and economic outcomes for adults as well as for their children (although the evidence is far from conclusive).[9] In part, a self-reinforcing process may be at work in poor neighborhoods. For example, Wilson suggests that where high rates of joblessness prevail, young people are cut off from role models and routines of life that can help socialize them for work. In that context, they may be more likely to resort to crime and other antisocial behaviors and to become teen parents. These behaviors, in turn, can diminish their prospects for completing school, acquiring skills, and moving into well-paying steady employment.

Wilson and other writers also point to the likelihood that residents in poor areas are disproportionately isolated from social networks that can help them in the job market. For example, they often have fewer "connections" to people who can tell them about job openings (many of which go unadvertised) or who can serve as effective references by writing a convincing letter of recommendation, "putting in a good word" with an employer, or otherwise interceding on their behalf.[10]

Inner-city residents may also be among the people most deeply affected by the recent sea change in national policies for the poor, especially time limits on welfare and other restrictions on access to safety-net benefits. These changes were enacted under the 1996 federal legislation that replaced the nation's entitlement-based cash welfare system, Aid to Families with Dependent

6. Jargowsky, 1997, p. 39.

7. Dickens, 1999, p. 382.

8. See, for example, Wilson, 1996; Jargowsky, 1997; Dickens, 1999; Levy, 1998.

9. See Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, and Aber, 1997; Briggs, 1997; and Turner, 1998, for reviews of this literature.

10. Briggs (1998) draws the useful distinction between two dimensions of social capital: "social leverage," which is about access to information and influence that can help a person get ahead, and "social support," which can help a person cope with difficult situations — for example, by providing emotional support or a small loan in an emergency.

Children (AFDC), with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Even with more welfare recipients leaving the rolls for work, substantial numbers of inner-city residents may be left behind, facing the loss of welfare benefits but with no steady employment, for the reasons mentioned above. Those same residents are also likely to be hurt the most by future national economic downturns.

JOBLESSNESS IN PUBLIC HOUSING

The problems plaguing inner-city communities are particularly acute in many of the nation's public housing developments, which themselves rank among the most economically deprived neighborhoods in the country and are often part of larger neighborhoods with high rates of joblessness and poverty. In fact, almost 54 percent of the nation's 1.2 million units of public housing are located in high-poverty census tracts, and 68 percent are located in census tracts where 40 percent or more of working-age men have no regular employment.[11] Furthermore, the concentration of public and other forms of government-assisted housing in inner cities is believed by many to contribute to the social and economic distress of the communities that surround them.

The population living in public housing has become substantially poorer in recent decades owing to the changing mission of public housing itself. Since its inception during the Great Depression, this strand of the nation's social safety net has evolved from offering transitional shelter for unemployed workers to providing permanent housing for the chronically nonemployed and impoverished. Today, families with working members make up a minority of residents, especially in large inner-city housing developments. Nationally, only about one-third of public housing families with children report wages as their primary source of income, whereas public assistance — including AFDC/TANF payments, state-provided General Assistance (GA), and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) — is the primary source of income for almost 50 percent of residents.[12]

In some cities, public housing residents appear to be among the hardest people to employ among welfare recipients and other low-income groups.[13] Many residents have poor education and job skills, meager work-relevant credentials, and an array of personal problems or situations that make it difficult to work. Furthermore, although empirical evidence is limited, it is widely believed that the mere circumstance of living in public housing directly impedes work — because of the stigma it casts on residents in the eyes of many employers in the community, the physical or social separation of residents from parts of the city or region where jobs are more abundant, and the influence of a social environment that may not promote and reward work. In addition, public housing rent rules, under which rent increases as earnings rise, have long been thought to discourage many residents from working.

Increasing residents' employment may be critical not only for helping residents make progress toward self-sufficiency, but also for ensuring the future viability of public housing itself as a source of decent, affordable housing for low-income fami-

11. Newman and Schnare, 1997.

12. U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1998. General Assistance is cash and/or in-kind support that some states and localities provide to eligible persons who do not qualify for federal cash assistance (such as single adults and childless couples). Supplemental Security Income is a federal program for low-income disabled adults.

13. Riccio and Orenstein, 1999.

lies. Some observers fear that welfare reform will leave many residents with less income with which to pay their rent, and that shrinking federal operating subsidies to local public housing authorities will make it harder for those authorities to fill the gap left by declining rent revenues. The resulting financial strain could foster a decline in the quality of housing services and living conditions, and perhaps even threaten the housing authorities' very solvency.[14]

CREATING HIGH-EMPLOYMENT, MIXED-INCOME PUBLIC HOUSING

One way to transform public housing developments from places of concentrated joblessness to places of high employment with a better mix of incomes is for housing authorities to recruit working families. Indeed, recent federal housing legislation — the Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 — encourages and makes it easier for them to do just that (see next column). However, this approach would do nothing directly to improve the employment prospects of residents already living in public housing or of new residents who are not steadily employed. Moreover, convincing working families to move into the developments may be a formidable challenge given the negative reputation of public housing in many cities.

A different approach is one that aims to raise the employment rate and earnings of new and current residents who are unemployed or underemployed.[15] Self-sufficiency initiatives attempting to do this are certainly not new to public housing.

THE QUALITY HOUSING AND WORK RESPONSIBILITY ACT OF 1998

Repeals federally mandated occupancy preferences, allowing local housing authorities to set their own criteria based on local housing needs and priorities.

Reduces the proportion of units that must be reserved for *very* low-income applicants to encourage recruitment of higher-income and working families.

Requires that housing authorities avoid concentrating the poor within public housing developments and buildings, and permits them to offer incentives to residents to achieve income mixing and deconcentration of poverty.

Establishes new rent policies intended to increase the financial incentive for residents to work.

Establishes better links between housing and welfare policies by requiring that residents' rent *not* be reduced when they lose welfare payments because of noncompliance or fraud. Rent *will* be reduced when residents lose income because of welfare time limits.

Establishes a community service requirement, mandating that each adult resident contribute eight hours of community service per month, unless exempted (for such reasons as disability, employment, or participation in welfare-to-work or certain other employment programs).

14. See, for example, Naparstek, Dooley, and Smith, 1997. However, the U.S. General Accounting Office (1998) reports that the effects of welfare reform on the need for additional operating subsidies for HUD's housing subsidy programs are extremely difficult to forecast and existing empirical estimates vary widely.

15. Resident relocation or dispersal programs are another response to the employment problems of public housing residents. For example, the Gautreaux program in Chicago tested a strategy of offering public housing residents (and others eligible for public housing) Section 8 rent certificates that could be used only in low-poverty, predominantly white or racially mixed neighborhoods. (The Section 8 program authorizes rent subsidies for eligible low-income people living in private housing.) A more rigorous national test of this approach is being conducted in the Moving to Opportunity demonstration, which is still under way (see Turner, 1998). While this strategy may help the individuals involved, it does not create mixed-income public housing.

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One example is HUD's Step-Up program, which provides apprenticeship training in home construction trades, with on-the-job experience offered through rehabilitation projects within public housing developments. Another is the Family Self-Sufficiency program, in which housing authorities offer employment and training referrals, job counseling and support, and opportunities to have rent increases that result from higher earnings put into a special escrow savings account for residents. In general, however, housing-based interventions have been quite modest in scale and scope and, in their present form, are unlikely to move *truly large* numbers of residents into steady employment.[16]

THE BROADER RELEVANCE OF JOBS-PLUS

As this chapter suggests, a search for ways to increase work among public housing residents can be justified on a number of grounds, making the Jobs-Plus demonstration critically important to policy development in the field of public housing. The demonstration, however, is about much more than public housing.

Community revitalization

Jobs-Plus embodies the idea, suggested by Wilson and others, that reducing high rates of joblessness is absolutely fundamental to the revitalization of high-poverty, inner-city communities. Yet, large-scale employment programs (in contrast to economic development initiatives) are seldom "place-based." Rather than target particular neighborhoods, they usually target particular categories of people who may live in many different neighborhoods. Consequently, little is known about whether a place-based approach would be feasible and whether it would, in fact, contribute to overall community improvement. Jobs-Plus — which recognizes that public housing developments are neighborhoods in and of themselves, as well as part of larger communities — is a rare example of such a strategy, and the lessons it yields may offer guidance for other community revitalization or place-based efforts that want to give a prominent role to employment goals.[17]

Helping the hard to employ

In order to achieve its ambitious employment goals, Jobs-Plus will need to work closely and effectively with people who are the most difficult to employ. These include residents with a long history of welfare receipt and a long-term absence from the labor market, many of whom also lack basic literacy and numeracy skills, are not proficient in English, have substance abuse problems or criminal records, or have serious personal and family problems, including problems of domestic violence. In the past, many such people — whether living in public housing or not — have been exempted from, missed by, or simply not well served by mainstream welfare-to-work and job training programs.

Improving that record is an important national priority. Among welfare recipients, such people are considered the most at risk of reaching the end of

16. See Riccio, 1999; Newman, 1999.

17. One such initiative, the Neighborhood Jobs Initiative (NJI), is a companion project to Jobs-Plus. In each of five inner-city neighborhoods, MDRC is providing technical assistance to a community-based organization to help it and other partners formulate a neighborhood employment strategy. An important goal of this initiative is to learn whether it is feasible to apply some of the same principles and approaches of Jobs-Plus outside of public housing (Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, 1998).

their welfare time limits without having a way to support themselves and their families. In fact, it was with this in mind that the federal government authorized the $3 billion Welfare-to-Work Grants initiative in 1997 to improve employment opportunities for hard-to-employ TANF recipients.[18]

At the local level, responsibility for administering these new grants is largely in the hands of Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) agencies. This is the nation's main job training system for low-income people, and the grants add to recent pressures on the system to serve a more disadvantaged population. (JTPA has been replaced by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, under which local Workforce Investment Boards will assume these responsibilities from JTPA Private Industry Councils.) The strategies devised for Jobs-Plus, if successful, may help the welfare and job training systems meet their pressing needs to find jobs for the hard to-employ members of their own caseloads, especially those who live in public housing, but possibly others as well.

Job retention and advancement

A second major challenge facing welfare-to-work and job training programs is how to help those who do find work *remain* employed and, over time, climb the ladder from low-paying to better-paying jobs. Meeting these goals will require not simply emulating widely popular rapid employment or "work first" strategies, but building a more enduring set of services, incentives, and special supports to improve job retention and advancement. These are qualitatively different tasks than employment and training programs have previously performed. Here again the ideas and lessons learned from Jobs-Plus may point toward approaches worth trying in other programs operating outside as well as within public housing.

Local collaboration and systems change

The national designers of Jobs-Plus formulated a basic program model or approach, but they delegated responsibility for the detailed design and operation of the program to newly formed partnerships or "collaboratives" in each city. Collaboration is a standard feature of the growing number of community-building initiatives in poor communities, and it has an increasingly important place in certain government-sponsored urban revitalization projects and job training system reforms. As Chapter 2 discusses in detail, the designers of the demonstration saw potential in this approach for Jobs-Plus. They believed that bringing together the major welfare, workforce development (JTPA), and public housing systems, residents, and other local actors in new partnerships to design and operate Jobs-Plus might be a particularly effective way of creating a program that would be well conceived, well funded, and (if successful) more likely to be sustained after the demonstration ends.

The demonstration's designers also believed that this approach might foster broader systems change. Whether or not the program is continued beyond the demonstration, collaboration within the project might change how the major local agencies and other partners work together in the

18. Among the target groups for these funds are people who meet the following criteria: lack of a high school diploma or General Educational Development certificate (a GED) and low reading or math skills; a need for substance abuse treatment in order to get and keep a job; a poor work history; or being a short-term welfare recipient with characteristics associated with long-term welfare receipt, such as having dropped out of school, having been pregnant as a teenager, or having a poor work history or, in some cases, being a noncustodial parent (U.S. Department of Labor, 1997).

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future. For example, they might begin to collaborate more routinely on work, welfare, education, and community development policies and begin integrating service delivery for poor people citywide. Local institutions other than the public housing authority might also begin working more directly with resident organizations, not just with housing authority staff. These kinds of systems changes were envisioned as a potentially valuable by-product of local collaboration, and one that might contribute broader lessons on ways of building enduring community partnerships.

The relevance of Jobs-Plus not only to improving the lives of public housing residents, but also to all of these important policy issues — community revitalization, helping the hard to employ, job retention and advancement, and local collaboration and systems change — should make the lessons from this ambitious undertaking of interest to a wide audience.

Chapter 2

Formulating the Jobs-Plus Approach

As the demonstration's designers set out to craft a new vision for combating high rates of joblessness in public housing, they sought to build upon lessons from carefully researched employment initiatives of the past. In addition, they tried to apply the most important principles underlying a growing number of comprehensive community initiatives, which are attempting to improve the quality of life in poor urban neighborhoods in new ways. This chapter begins by reviewing those lessons and principles, and then describes the Jobs-Plus model that was formulated with them in mind.

LESSONS FROM WELFARE-TO-WORK AND JOB TRAINING EVALUATIONS

Mainstream welfare-to-work and job training programs have traditionally included several core features. The most typical strategies have offered job search assistance (that is, instruction and guidance in how to look for work, apply for jobs, and conduct oneself in job interviews); classroom-based education and training; and, to some extent, unpaid work experience or on-the-job training. Case management and subsidies for child care and transportation to help recipients participate in the program are common. Programs operated within the welfare system have also included participation mandates, under which recipients face possible reductions in their welfare grants if they fail to participate without "good cause."

Careful evaluations have found that such programs increased recipients' earnings, reduced their welfare receipt, and more than paid for themselves. Mandatory welfare-to-work initiatives offering a mix of job search assistance, education, and training, with a clear and pervasive focus on relatively quick employment, may be especially effective. But while the gains have been impressive, the success of even the best-performing programs has had clear limits. The programs have left substantial numbers of recipients on the rolls and have not greatly reduced the common problem of high job turnover or the difficulty of moving from low-wage jobs to better-paying jobs and out of poverty. These have been among the toughest problems to solve, particularly for the least skilled recipients.[1] (It is uncertain how time limits on welfare benefits will ultimately affect these problems.)

More recent initiatives have adopted a broader vision of what it takes to help welfare recipients succeed in the labor market. Recognizing that leaving welfare for work at a low-paying job would not necessarily make recipients better off financially, most states as part of their TANF welfare reforms have changed the way they calculate welfare grants in order to "make work pay." Specifically, they allow more of a recipient's earnings to be "disregarded" when the amount of the welfare grant is calculated. This means that more recipients are able to continue to receive welfare while working, and thus come out ahead financially by choosing to work. Interim results from a test under way in Minnesota of a program that combines such incentives with participation mandates and employment services are promising, especially for urban long-term welfare recipients who live in subsidized housing. After

1. See, for example, Bloom et al., 1993; Bloom, 1997; Hamilton et al., 1997; Scrivener et al., 1998; Riccio, Friedlander, and Freedman, 1994. For a broader review of literature relevant to comprehensive community initiatives' efforts to increase employment, see Auspos, 1998.

18 months, employment and earnings were higher and poverty rates lower for the program group in comparison to a randomly selected control group.[2]

A more comprehensive approach operating outside the existing public assistance system was tested on a demonstration basis in two areas of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The New Hope program included an earnings supplement, child care subsidies, and affordable health insurance for eligible low-income people taking full-time jobs, and access to a temporary subsidized job for those who could not find full-time work in the unsubsidized labor market. An evaluation of the program found that it had positive effects on the employment, earnings, and income of people who were not working full time when they entered the program, and some positive effects on participants' children, particularly boys (for example, improved behavior in school and higher educational and occupational expectations).[3]

Like these newer initiatives, Jobs-Plus combines employment-related services with financial incentives as part of its overall strategy. But, as discussed below, it attempts to go even further.

TAKING HEED OF COMMUNITY-BUILDING PRINCIPLES

The last decade has seen the rise of numerous community efforts attempting to revitalize poor urban neighborhoods and improve their residents' quality of life. The earliest examples launched in the late 1980s by the Annie E. Casey Foundation (New Futures), Ford Foundation (Neighborhood and Family Initiative), and Rockefeller Foundation (Community Planning and Action Program) helped inspire the emergence of an estimated 50 foundation-funded projects that have come to be known as "comprehensive community initiatives."[4] "These initiatives," one observer notes, "were different from past efforts in rejecting the notion that discrete 'programs' were the answer to urban poverty, in favor of a longer-term approach that builds community institutions, social networks, and residents' self-reliance."[5] Although their goals and tactics differ in the details, these initiatives tend to share a common set of "community-building" principles, which stress local control; collaborative decisionmaking; resident empowerment; building on residents' and communities' existing physical, economic, and social assets; and strengthening the capacity of residents and local institutions to promote and sustain positive changes in their communities.[6]

Social capital

The community-building focus of these projects has drawn inspiration from a growing body of research stressing the importance of "social capital" in the life of a community and for the well-being and economic advancement of the people living there. Unlike physical capital (such as factories, equipment, and commercial space) and human capital (such as skills), social capital "inheres in the structure of relations between actors and among actors."[7] Particularly important

2. Miller et al., 1997; Miller, 1998.

3. Bos et al., 1999.

4. Aspen Institute, 1997; Walsh, 1997; Chaskin, Dansokho, and Joseph, 1997; Brown, Branch, and Lee, 1998.

5. Walsh, 1997, p. viii.

6. Aspen Institute, 1997; Kingsley, McNeely, and Gibson, 1997; Walsh, 1997.

7. Coleman, 1988, p. S98.

from a community perspective are aspects of social capital such as the residents' engagement in formal and informal neighborhood organizations (such as churches, sports leagues, and parent-teacher associations), their personal friendship networks within and beyond the neighborhood, and relationships among larger community institutions (local businesses, schools, the police, and so on). Communities are said to be rich in social capital when there are high levels of engagement in such relationships, and where these relationships are governed by trust and norms of cooperation and reciprocity.

Political scientist Robert Putnam has popularized the concept with one study that drew a link between the level of civic engagement and the degree of success of regional government and economic development in Italy, and another documenting the decline of civic engagement in the United States.[8] Other community studies in the United States have found statistical relationships between the levels of certain aspects of social capital and some neighborhood outcomes such as crime rates and neighborhood stability.[9] And, as previously discussed, a number of studies highlight the possible link between social networks in poorer communities (for example, where residents have fewer "connections" to people who can help them get jobs) and the lower employment rates and lower-paying jobs among people living there.[10]

8. Putnam, 1995.

9. See, for example, Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls, 1997; Temkin and Rohe, 1998.

10. Dickens (1999, p. 406) comments that "recent studies suggest that about half of all jobs and a larger fraction of good jobs are found through connections," and that "persons displaced into unemployment represent a double burden. They are no longer a source of information to the community about new jobs. And they are an additional burden to the network providing job referrals. . . . The net effect is that the escape from unemployment takes longer."

Involving community stakeholders

Among the most important principles of community-building initiatives are local collaboration and resident empowerment. These call for key stakeholders to share the decisionmaking authority that controls the direction of the initiative, and for residents to play a central if not the defining role, with their special knowledge of their own communities considered essential to the success of any local initiative. But residents must work collaboratively with institutional stakeholders (such as various social service agencies, schools, community-based organizations, banks, businesses, hospitals, churches, the mayor's office, and public housing authorities) that control resources and broader political influence affecting what can get accomplished. More generally, the joint efforts of a variety of institutions and systems, this view holds, can be much more effective than individual systems working independently.

These principles, which have been features of past government-sponsored urban initiatives (for example, the Community Action Program and Model Cities), appear to be enjoying a new prominence. They figure in the federal government's HOPE VI program, which funds the replacement or reconstruction of decaying public housing developments, and the federal Empowerment Zone/Enterprise Communities program, which funds economic revitalization efforts in distressed communities. In each of these initiatives, residents and community groups are to be fully engaged with other community stakeholders in determining what gets done and how it gets done, and the approaches are to reflect more comprehensive visions for sustained community development, not simply housing rehabilitation or economic development.[11]

11. Kingsley et al., 1997; Naparstek, Dooley, and Smith, 1997.

The national designers of the Jobs-Plus demonstration similarly drew on community-building principles. Local stakeholders were to design and operate the program in each participating community, though within a common framework, which includes a social capital component, under the rubric "community support for work." And like all community initiatives, Jobs-Plus hopes to achieve broad improvements in the quality of residents' lives. It differs from the more typical approach, however, in that instead of attempting to achieve a variety of community change goals simultaneously, it focuses on a single goal: improving employment outcomes. This is the driving force around which all program elements are organized. It is hypothesized (drawing on the work of Wilson and others) that by dramatically increasing employment, other improvements in residents' quality of life will follow: reduced poverty and material hardship, crime, substance abuse, and social isolation; increased general satisfaction with living in the community; improved outcomes for children; and so on.

A THREE-COMPONENT, SATURATION-LEVEL INTERVENTION

With the lessons from past employment initiatives and the principles of community-building in mind, The Rockefeller Foundation, HUD, and MDRC envisioned a new intervention for public housing that would be unusually comprehensive. It would attempt to address, in depth, a *combination* of problems widely believed to conspire against sustained employment: poor preparation for work; inadequate knowledge about seeking work; personal, family, or situational problems (such as lack of child care or transportation); absence of a strong financial incentive; and weak social and institutional support (for example, living in a social environment that does not promote or facilitate work).

The three program components

In response to this diagnosis, the program's designers conceived of a broad, three-component intervention. One component would focus on *employment-related activities and support services*. These would draw on the best practices of past employment initiatives and include such activities as instruction in job search skills, combined with some education and training. Also necessary would be assistance with child care and transportation to make it feasible to work and participate in work-related activities. Some of these services could be offered on site at the developments, but the great diversity in residents' job readiness and service needs would also require access to networks of existing services. The second component would involve the creation of new *financial incentives to work*. These would include new public housing rent rules to help "make work pay," by reducing the extent to which gains in earnings are offset by increases in rent. The program's third component, called *community support for work*, would involve strengthening residents' work-supporting social capital. For example, Jobs-Plus would attempt to foster work-related information-sharing, peer support, and mutual aid among residents and with people living outside public housing.

In search of a "tipping point": a saturation-level approach

Jobs-Plus is distinctive not simply because of its three-pronged strategy, but also in its intent to implement these components at "saturation" levels. Far from being a limited-slot program for just a small subset of residents, Jobs-Plus is targeted toward *all* working-age residents living in the selected housing developments. At the very least, if it is implemented as intended, all such residents will be exposed to new work-promoting "messages" from program staff and neighbors alike. Furthermore, many families who participate will benefit from the new financial incentives, and a diverse array of services and supports is expected to be available on a scale that can accommodate all who come forward.

Providing the components of Jobs-Plus at saturation levels is fundamental to the program's theory of change — the vision of how it is expected to produce unusually large impacts on employment and earnings. By flooding a development with services, incentives, and supports, the program should result in a substantial majority of working-age residents being employed.[12] According to this theory, targeting the intervention toward the entire working-age population will produce a critical mass of employed residents (reaching a "tipping point")[13] whose experiences will generate momentum for change across the development. As these vanguard workers grow in number, their visibility and role-model influence will be enhanced. Their own success in the workforce will signal to others the feasibility and benefits of working, elevate and strengthen social norms that encourage work, foster the growth of work-supporting social networks, and, ultimately, contribute to still more residents getting and keeping jobs.

THE JOBS-PLUS APPROACH

Saturation —
Reaching all working-age residents through:

Employment-related services +	Financial incentives +	Community support for work →	Big improvements in employment, earnings, and quality of life

BEYOND A SINGLE SYSTEM: COLLABORATION AND LOCAL CONTROL

It is one thing to formulate the theory and basic principles of Jobs-Plus; it is quite another to determine how the program's elements will be put into action across very different communities. At the outset, the demonstration's designers decided not to attempt to make these and other detailed design choices centrally. Instead, drawing inspiration from the many community-building initiatives that had gone before, they chose to leave these decisions to local collaboratives to be formed for this purpose. By requiring that the cities tap a broad and deep reservoir of local knowledge, technical expertise, and resources, the national designers hoped that a program would emerge that stood a much greater chance of success than if any one of the partners (such as the housing authority) were to design and operate it alone, or if the program were to be designed entirely by the demon-

12. No fixed employment targets have been established by the demonstration's designers, but the sites themselves are aiming to have at least 60 percent of their working-age residents employed at any given time.

13. Gladwell, 1996.

stration's national designers. The local partners would understand their own community best, would bring different types of expertise and resources to the table, and, because of their direct responsibility for the program, would work hard to make it succeed.

Four essential partners: the public housing authority, welfare department, JTPA, and residents

The collaboratives were expected to include a broad group of actors, but four partners were considered to be absolutely essential: the public housing authority, resident representatives, the welfare department, and the workforce development system (represented by the local JTPA agency). Each of these partners would bring something special and important to the task of designing and implementing an effective Jobs-Plus program, but was also limited in what it could do on its own. The public housing authorities would bring access to HUD resources, control over local public housing policies, control over the deployment of local housing authority staff and management systems, and experience in working with residents. However, most had little prior experience operating large-scale employment programs. In contrast, the two other public systems involved — the welfare system and JTPA — could contribute this type of programmatic expertise along with substantial financial resources, but had little direct understanding of the special situations facing members of their caseloads living in public housing. Finally, the resident representatives, although not controlling substantial institutional resources or offering technical expertise, would bring an invaluable in-depth understanding of the resident population and important insights into what program approaches would or would not appeal to residents. They would also bring the informal but powerful authority to elicit broad resident support for (or, if they thought it necessary, opposition to) the program.

Funding considerations were key to the sponsors' decision to require the housing authorities to collaborate with welfare departments and JTPA to design and implement Jobs-Plus. For one thing, the cost of operating such an ambitious initiative in seven cities was beyond what could be raised by the national designers. But just as important was the designers' belief that any realistic hope of sustaining and expanding Jobs-Plus (if successful) after the demonstration ended would require funding from more than just the housing authority. The two mainstream public systems through which most government dollars for welfare-to-work and job training services flow in the United States would need to share this financial burden. And they were more likely to do so if they felt a joint sense of ownership over and responsibility for the program during its demonstration phase.

It is understandable why Jobs-Plus might benefit from the involvement of public systems other than the housing authority. But why would those systems want to be involved with Jobs-Plus? What was in it for them?

Both systems serve significant numbers of public housing residents. For example, nationally, approximately 24 percent of AFDC/TANF recipients in 1996 were residents of public housing or received other federal government assistance to pay their rent in privately owned housing.[14] Thus, working together with the housing authority should appeal to their own institutional interests, if

14. Sard and Daskal, 1998. This rate varies widely from state to state. For example, in 1996, 40 percent of AFDC/TANF families in Massachusetts received housing assistance compared with 12 percent in California.

doing so could help them more effectively help the people they serve become self-sufficient.

Moreover, at the time the demonstration was launched, the welfare and job training systems were themselves in flux, and moving in a direction that made them natural partners for Jobs-Plus. Pressure was growing on them to serve more effectively low-income people who were more difficult to employ, many of whom lived in public housing. As discussed in Chapter 1, the passage of federal welfare legislation in 1996 introduced five-year time limits on federally funded cash welfare benefits for most families. This created a new urgency to find ways to improve employment outcomes for those who were the most at risk of using up their benefits and being left with few good options for supporting themselves or their families. The JTPA system was also being pushed to serve those with the greatest employment barriers. It was given responsibility to administer the federal Welfare-to-Work Grants initiative intended to improve job opportunities for the hardest-to-employ TANF recipients. In addition, the legislation replacing JTPA — the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 — will redirect more intensive assessment, case management, and job training to people who have difficulty finding and keeping jobs through simpler job search and job placement assistance, with some priority for the more intensive services going to welfare recipients.

A broad partnership

The demonstration's designers believed that in addition to bringing together the housing authority, the welfare and job training systems, and residents, each collaborative would benefit by involving other local actors. For example, these could include employment and training providers, education agencies, community organizations, local and regional foundations, employers and business organizations, and local elected officials. Such partners might bring specialized knowledge about the community in which the Jobs-Plus development was located, other kinds of experience in serving public housing residents, special expertise in serving difficult-to-employ populations, and additional power to influence local public and private policies and resource decisions in ways that could serve the mission of Jobs-Plus.

In sum, the national designers believed that it would take a broad partnership to make Jobs-Plus a success. At the same time, they knew that shared decisionmaking among many partners is a notoriously difficult enterprise and does not always work. But the promise it offered made this approach a risk they considered well worth taking.

Chapter 3

The Sites: Why Were They Selected and What Are They Like?

WHEN launching Jobs-Plus, the demonstration's designers did not attempt to recruit cities and housing authorities that, as a group, were "typical" or average from a national perspective. Rather, they set out to recruit a diverse set of sites where joblessness in public housing was a serious problem and where there would be an opportunity to build and test a relatively large-scale, well-managed Jobs-Plus program. This chapter discusses how the recruitment process was conducted and the characteristics of the housing developments it yielded. It also includes an overview of the technical assistance offered to the selected sites to help them build strong collaboratives and programs.

THE SELECTION CRITERIA

Cities were chosen for the demonstration through a national competition sponsored by The Rockefeller Foundation and HUD and managed by MDRC. Together these three organizations established the site selection criteria and picked the sites.

Only relatively large housing developments — defined as having at least 250 family-occupied units, not counting those occupied only by people 62 years old or older — could qualify. In addition, no more than 30 percent of families living in these developments could have an employed family member, and at least 40 percent had to be receiving AFDC. These criteria were meant to ensure that Jobs-Plus would be tested in places where the need for an employment intervention was great and where the scale of the intervention would be substantial.[1] A saturation strategy targeting all working-age residents would be considerably easier to implement in much smaller settings, but would be less valuable from a policy perspective. It would offer no opportunity to learn whether a saturation approach was broadly feasible, or whether large developments could be transformed from low-employment to high-employment communities. Across the continental United States, 442 housing developments managed by 53 housing authorities met the size-of-development criterion.[2]

The quality of the housing management provided by the housing authority was also considered. Because Jobs-Plus was such a complex intervention, even the most effective housing authorities would be greatly challenged in getting such a program off the ground. Consequently, an effort was made to screen out those having difficulty providing basic housing services, a problem that could detract attention from Jobs-Plus and prevent this approach from getting a fair test.

The cities applying for the demonstration had to be willing to adopt a collaborative strategy in designing and operating Jobs-Plus. At least some of the key partners had to have successfully collaborated on other local initiatives. The core role anticipated for the housing authority and the welfare and JTPA systems (see Chapter 2) made the commitment of those systems particularly essential. The applicants also had to show a willingness to include residents as full collaborative partners, and existing resident organizations had to have a reasonable capacity to play that role.

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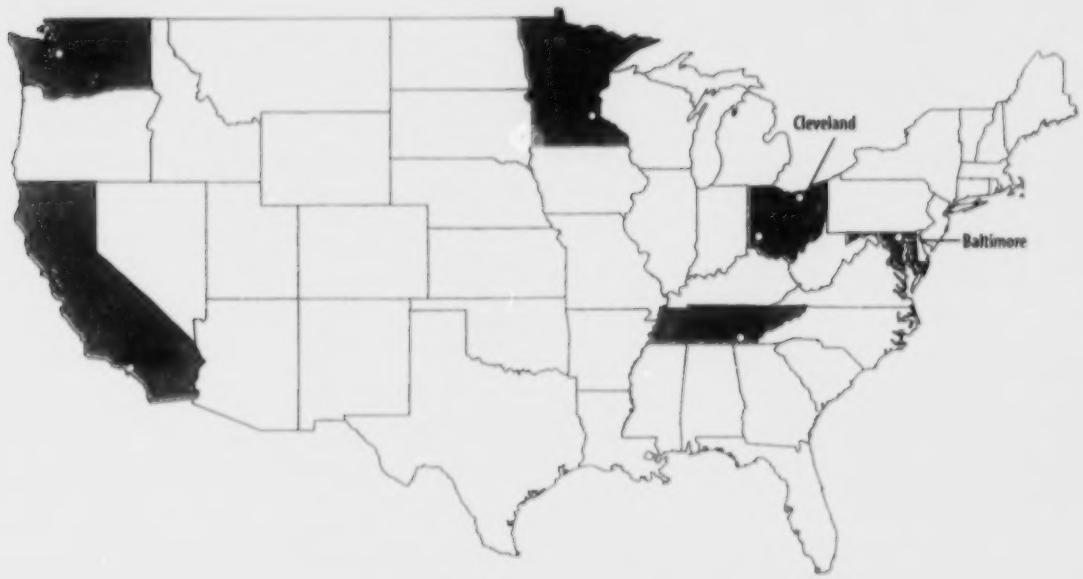
1. The sample-size needs of the demonstration's evaluation design were another consideration.

2. This estimate is based on MDRC calculations using 1993 data from HUD's Information Services Division of Public and Indian Housing.

CITIES IN THE JOBS-PLUS DEMONSTRATION



environments, labor markets, political cultures, and populations — all of which might influence the design, operation, and effects of the Jobs-Plus program.

THE SETTINGS

In contrast to the huge tower blocks that loom large in the popular image of public housing but are not the norm, all the Jobs-Plus developments are composed primarily of low-rise units. All but one contain more than 400 households. St. Paul's Mt. Airy Homes is the smallest, with fewer than 300 occupied units. The photographs on pages 20–21 offer a glimpse of the style of housing and grounds found at each development. Several sites make a particularly good appearance, while others convey greater age and disrepair. The neighborhoods surrounding the Jobs-Plus developments also vary in attractiveness and safety. And while some housing developments are close to commercial districts via public transportation, others are more isolated.

Census data from 1990 — the latest available — indicate the types of areas in which the Jobs-Plus developments are located and show them to be similar to the kinds of places on which much of the literature on high-poverty communities focuses (see Chapter 1). As shown in Table 3.1, these are primarily (in most cases, almost exclusively) census tracts populated by people of color. They are also tracts in which a high proportion of households were headed by single parents, many were living in poverty, and large numbers of adults did not have a high school diploma and were not in the labor market. Six of the eight developments are located in census tracts in which poverty rates ranged from 49 to 74 percent, well above the 30 or 40 percent threshold commonly used to designate

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Finally, the local partners had to be able to meet and be willing to cooperate with the demands of a rigorous research design. Importantly, the housing authority had to have at least two but preferably three developments that would qualify for Jobs-Plus, and MDRC had to be allowed to determine *randomly* which one of these would be selected to operate the program. One or two of the others would be assigned to a comparison group where Jobs-Plus would not be operated. Comparisons between the Jobs-Plus and non–Jobs-Plus developments would help the evaluation determine the effectiveness of the program (see the Appendix).

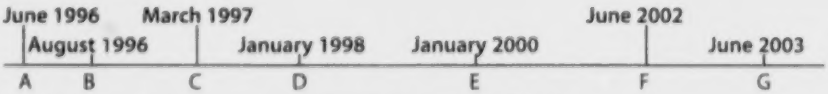
CHOOSING FROM A LARGE POOL OF INTERESTED CITIES

In June 1996, an invitation to submit a statement of interest in the demonstration was sent to 50 of the 53 cities where, according to nationally available data, the public housing authority had the types of developments that were being sought. Attesting to the importance that housing authorities and other city agencies ascribed to the goals of the project, responses were received from 42 cities. After several rounds of information-gathering, in-depth site assessments, and internal reviews, The Rockefeller Foundation, HUD, and MDRC chose 15 cities by August 1996 to begin several months of program planning. During that period, these semifinalists received some technical assistance from MDRC and other groups, in anticipation of submitting a formal application for the demonstration.[3] Of the 15, six chose not to continue with their applications or were not encouraged by the demonstration's designers to remain in the pool of candidate sites. In March 1997, the final seven sites were selected to begin the main design and implementation phase of the demonstration.

The eight developments in these seven cities offer a richly diverse set of locations and people that will permit learning about the program's feasibility and effectiveness. One city (Baltimore) is located on the East Coast; two cities (Los Angeles, which has two Jobs-Plus developments, and Seattle) are on the West Coast; three (Cleveland, Dayton, and St. Paul) are in the Midwest; and one (Chattanooga) is in the South (see page 18). These are medium- to large-size cities with different local housing conditions, housing markets, service

3. MDRC staff and consultants visited each of these 15 cities and also sponsored a cross-site conference attended by key collaborative partners from each city, offering workshops and training sessions to help them think boldly and creatively about their initial program designs. After that conference, the sites were required to submit detailed, written applications in which they described their collaboratives, gave evidence of local funding and resource commitments, and described their early vision of a Jobs-Plus program.

THE JOBS-PLUS TIMELINE



A Invitations for a statement of interest were mailed to 50 cities.

B 15 cities were selected for the pre-planning period; developments slated for Jobs-Plus were picked; technical assistance began.

C 7 cities were selected for the main planning and implementation phase, including more intensive technical assistance.

D By this date, the sites had begun serving a small number of residents.

E MDRC technical assistance is to be substantially reduced.

F Scheduled end of data collection for the evaluation.

G Scheduled final report and end of the demonstration.

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TABLE 3.1

Characteristics of Census Tracts of Jobs-Plus Developments in 1990

Characteristic	Baltimore (Gilmor Homes)	Chattanooga (Harriet Tubman Homes)	Cleveland (Woodhill Homes Estates)	Dayton (DeSoto Bass Courts)	Los Angeles (Imperial Courts)	Los Angeles (William Mead Homes)	St. Paul (Mt. Airy Homes)	Seattle (Rainier Vista)
Race/ethnicity (%)								
Black, non-Hispanic	98	97	94	97	62	34	10	19
White, non-Hispanic	0	3	5	1	1	18	17	25
Hispanic	1	0	1	1	37	42	3	4
Asian	0	0	0	2	0	5	69	50
Households headed by a single parent (%)	43	62	59	52	58	37	36	21
High school graduates, among persons age 25 or older (%)	53	49	51	58	37	59	34	71
Poverty rate (%)	24	58	56	52	59	49	74	20
Unemployment rate (%)	18	19	21	26	27	10	26	6
Not in the labor force, among persons age 16 or older (%)	44	59	49	56	63	87	79	36
Sample size	**4,871**	**2,702**	**4,896**	**4,240**	**4,565**	**9,252**	**2,031**	**7,557**

SOURCE: Tabulations for MDRC by the Center for Urban Research of the City University of New York, using the Atlas Select CD, a collection of 1990 census data.

NOTES: The sample in each city includes residents of the census tract in which the Jobs-Plus development is located. Distributions may not total 100 percent because of rounding. Before rounding, the zero percentages ranged from 0.1 to 0.4.

"high-poverty" areas. Seattle's Rainier Vista development is in the least disadvantaged area, according to the criteria listed in Table 3.1, though even there the poverty rate was 20 percent.

DIVERSE POPULATIONS

Tables 3.2 and 3.3 illustrate some of the important cross-site variation in the demographic characteristics of the people and households living in the Jobs-Plus developments in 1997 and 1996, respectively (before the program began). Table 3.2 shows that in five of the developments, the vast majority of household heads (from 78 percent to 99 percent) are African-American. One exception is St. Paul, where two-thirds are Southeast Asian (mostly Hmong immigrants from Laos). Seattle also has a mixed population, including Vietnamese, Cambodians, African-Americans, East African immigrants, and white residents. Together, African-Americans, East Africans, and Asians account for 85 percent of Seattle's household heads. In Los Angeles, one of the two developments (William Mead Homes) has a predominantly Hispanic population, with a substantial number of Southeast Asian residents as well. The other Los Angeles development (Imperial Courts)

THE JOBS-PLUS DEVELOPMENTS

BALTIMORE: GILMOR HOMES

THE largest development in the demonstration — with more than 500 low-rise units — Gilmor Homes is located in Sandtown-Winchester, an area of West Baltimore that has been the focus of several major community-building initiatives.

CHATTANOOGA: HARRIET TUBMAN HOMES

THIS development contains one- and two-story units, about a third of which are new or have been recently renovated. Several churches and numerous small and medium-size commercial establishments are located in the surrounding area.

CLEVELAND: WOODHILL HOMES ESTATES

THIS development, composed of townhouses and other low-rise units, is one of the Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority's oldest, and it has seen little renovation. Downtown Cleveland, six miles away, is accessible by bus.

DAYTON: DE SOTO BASS COURTS

BUILT around blocks of rowhouses, this development is close to Dayton's major bus lines, which connect residents to outlying suburban areas. It is about five miles from Montgomery County's one-stop Job Center.

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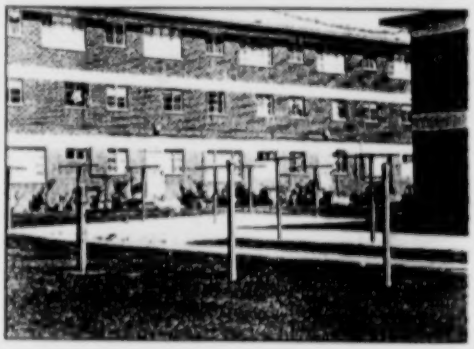
LOS ANGELES (1): IMPERIAL COURTS

THIS development is located in South Central Los Angeles, close to the Alameda Corridor — an area where special economic development efforts have been concentrated. Ten years ago, almost all the residents were African-American; today, approximately 20 percent are Hispanic.

LOS ANGELES (2): WILLIAM MEAD HOMES



THIS is one of a handful of residential neighborhoods in a largely industrial part of Los Angeles. Like Imperial Courts, it is located near the Alameda Corridor, though at the opposite end. Eighty percent of the residents are Hispanic, and more than half the households contain two or more adults.

ST. PAUL: MT. AIRY HOMES

THE smallest development in the demonstration — with fewer than 300 units — Mt. Airy contains both low-rise and high-rise units and is located about a mile from downtown St. Paul. Extensive renovations have transformed previously box-like structures into homes with pitched roofs and front porches. Sixty-five percent of the residents are Asian, primarily Hmong immigrants.

SEATTLE: RAINIER VISTA

THIS garden community development, located about five miles from downtown Seattle, was originally constructed as temporary housing for aircraft workers during World War II. The most recent exterior renovations were completed in 1994. In addition to its American-born population, Rainier Vista includes a large number of immigrant groups from Asia and East Africa. Residents speak more than 20 languages.

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TABLE 3.2

Selected Characteristics of Household Heads and Households Living in Jobs-Plus Developments in 1997

Characteristic	Baltimore (Gilmor Homes)	Chattanooga (Harriet Tubman Homes)	Cleveland (Woodhill Homes Estates)	Dayton (DeSoto Bass courts)	Los Angeles (Imperial courts)	Los Angeles (William Mead Homes)	St. Paul (Mt. Airy Homes)	Seattle (Rainier Vista)
	Characteristics of Heads of Households							
Race/ethnicity (%)								
Black, non-Hispanic	99	94	99	98	78	6	24	42[a]
White, non-Hispanic	0	3	0	1	2	1	5	12
Hispanic	0	3	0	0	20	80	3	0
Asian/Pacific Islander	0	0	0	0	0	13[b]	65[c]	43[b]
Other[d]	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	3
Female (%)	79	85	83	88	89	60	65	74
Elderly[e] (%)	16	12	3	8	8	15	8	16
Disabled (%)	30	27	11	22	16	17	27	31
	Characteristics of Households							
Number of adults in household (%)								
One	83	89	90	89	71	44	46	63
Two or more	17	11	10	11	29	56	54	37
Number of children in household (%)								
None	56	35	37	32	23	34	10	34
One	22	22	34	29	25	20	13	29
Two	14	23	17	22	25	21	17	18
Three or more	8	20	11	17	27	24	59	18
Length of residence (%)								
Less than one year	5	15	11	18	6	2	6	9
Ten years or more	23	15	13	20	16	24	22	2
Number of occupied units	**528**	**423**	**431**	**485**	**450**	**412**	**298**	**467**

SOURCE: MDRC calculations based on data from tenant rosters provided by housing authorities in October 1997.

NOTES: Distributions may not total 100 percent because of rounding.

[a]Includes a large proportion of East African immigrants.

[b]Includes primarily Southeast Asian immigrants from Cambodia and Vietnam.

[c]Includes primarily Southeast Asian immigrants (mostly Hmong).

[d]Includes groups such as Native Americans/Alaskans and a small number of people for whom the data are ambiguous.

[e]People 62 years of age or older.

TABLE 3.3

Income Sources of Households in Jobs-Plus Developments in 1996

Income Source	Baltimore (Gilmor Homes)	Chattanooga (Harriet Tubman Homes)	Cleveland (Woodhill Homes Estates)	Dayton (DeSoto Bass Courts)	Los Angeles (Imperial Courts)	Los Angeles (William Mead Homes)	St. Paul (Mt. Airy Homes)	Seattle (Rainier Vista)
Any income from (%):								
Wages	25	20	10	19	15	42	16	20
AFDC	46	73	54	56	70	46	n/a	52
Welfare[a]	85	90	69	82	93	75	87	85
Number of housing units	**879[b]**	**362**	**508**	**510**	**481**	**414**	**297**	**481**

SOURCE: Housing authority data reported to MDRC in 1996 as part of their Jobs-Plus application.

NOTES: [a]Includes Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), state General Assistance (GA) payments, and Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

[b]Includes scattered-site housing units affiliated with Gilmor Homes, which the Housing Authority of Baltimore City included in the data.

is predominantly African-American (78 percent of household heads), with a sizable Hispanic population (20 percent of household heads).

The majority of households across the sites (60 percent to 89 percent) are headed by women. However, the three with large immigrant populations (St. Paul, Seattle, and William Mead Homes in Los Angeles) have a substantial proportion of households with two adults (often two parents). Most developments have sizable proportions of disabled residents, reaching as high as 30 percent of household heads in Baltimore (where this classification includes many working-age people with severe drug problems) and 31 percent in Seattle.

The Jobs-Plus developments, though diverse, shared the common attribute of being low-work, high-welfare communities, a key consideration in their being selected for the demonstration. In 1996, according to data maintained by the housing authority in each city, only 10 percent to 20 percent of households across most developments had any income from earnings (see Table 3.3). Los Angeles's William Mead Homes was an exception, with 42 percent — still a low rate — having any earnings. From 46 percent to 73 percent of families received AFDC payments. When the definition of welfare is broadened to include other types of cash welfare (such as state General Assistance payments and Supplemental Security Income), the rates of welfare receipt reach 69 percent to 93 percent.[4]

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ON COLLABORATION AND PROGRAM DESIGN

Recognizing from the start that the kinds of partnerships and program envisioned for Jobs-Plus would not just happen — and would not happen quickly — the demonstration's designers

4. Future reports, using data from an initial survey of residents and from administrative records, will offer more precise estimates of employment, earnings, and welfare receipt, with a focus on the working-age population that makes up the target group for Jobs-Plus. The survey will also provide much richer information on the characteristics of the families living in the development and their perceptions of the quality of life there (see the Appendix).

looked to MDRC to play a change-agent role in each of the selected cities. The charge was broad and complex: to help the sites build their collaboratives into inclusive, effective decisionmaking bodies, and to help the collaboratives design and implement a compelling Jobs-Plus program.

The structure and content of technical assistance

The content of this technical assistance has varied, depending in part on the kind of help the sites need or want. It has encompassed such tasks as defining the partners' roles in the collaborative, ensuring that residents are included as full partners in the decisionmaking process, strengthening residents' leadership capacity, improving communication and cooperation among the partners, formulating a plan for each of the three components of Jobs-Plus (employment and training services, financial incentives, and community support for work), setting up workplans and budgets to guide the program implementation process, and identifying other local and national experts who can assist in the process of collaboration or particular program design issues.

Several other organizations with expertise in community-building or employment have contributed to this effort. Chief among them are The Empowerment Network (TEN), which specializes in organizing public housing residents, and the Consensus Organizing Institute (COI), which specializes in forging partnerships between local government and community groups. The Frank Hawkins Kenan Institute of Private Enterprise of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the Chicago-based Project Match (which developed an employment-focused case management strategy used in Chicago public housing) are also assisting some sites. In addition, the sites have made use of local technical assistance resources.[5]

To inspire the collaboratives to develop a bold vision for Jobs-Plus and to help them make informed program design choices, the technical assistance has helped the local partners become more knowledgeable about what strategies have worked best in past welfare-to-work and job training programs, and what new approaches are being tried by innovative programs around the country. As part of this educational process, MDRC organized cross-site conferences and meetings in which collaborative members could learn from each other and from national experts on employment and training, social services, and community-building. (Several representatives from each site, including residents, attended.) Cross-site planning retreats for resident representatives aimed to strengthen residents' capacity to function as productive, influential collaborative partners. Similarly, periodic cross-site meetings of the Jobs-Plus project directors, who were hired by the sites to manage the program on a day-to-day basis, have been sought to help them perform their leadership functions more effectively. These cross-site meetings have also strengthened the collaborative members' sense of identity with the national demonstration.

Refining the approach

Initially, most of MDRC's direct technical assistance was done by operations staff from its New York or California office, with one such staff member being assigned to each locality on a part-time basis. These people visited their assigned sites regularly (usually for a few days at a time each

5. In developing their community support for work component, several sites have consulted with the Time Dollar Institute of Washington, D.C., on how to set up a kind of bartering system in which residents would exchange services among themselves (such as child care in exchange for auto repair).

month) to attend planning meetings, offer direction and feedback, and monitor the sites' progress.

This centralized strategy soon proved insufficient to the task. In particular, since they were not available to the sites on an everyday basis, MDRC staff found it difficult to become true planning partners rather than outsiders who largely monitored and reacted to the sites' own efforts.

A new strategy was inaugurated in 1998. For most sites, MDRC hired a half-time consultant to serve as an *on-site* operations representative, working under the direction of the organization's New York-based staff person who was in charge of the demonstration's technical assistance effort. This structure has allowed the operations staff to function much more as partners to their sites. They can more easily attend collaborative meetings and work continuously and intensively with site staff *between* those meetings, and they are better positioned to help craft responses to innumerable day-to-day issues. This arrangement was also thought to be a more effective way of transferring skills and building local capacity — by "doing," not just reviewing and commenting. Overall, the on-site approach is a significant improvement, although it continues to be reviewed and refined.

A more flexible approach to providing other technical assistance was also initiated. Rather than MDRC's pre-selecting national organizations with specialized expertise to work with all the sites, the sites were given flexibility and resources to purchase technical assistance from local or national sources they believed would serve their particular needs, informed by knowledge of the local environment and of key actors in the collaboratives. This approach may also help the sites build relationships with organizations that they can more easily draw on as MDRC's own technical assistance winds down, which may enhance the program's sustainability beyond the demonstration.

Chapter 4

Building Local Collaboratives and Program Infrastructures: Early Experiences

THE Jobs-Plus collaboratives faced huge challenges: What kind of governance structure would work best? How should the collaboratives fund, staff, and house their Jobs-Plus program (that is, the program's infrastructure)? What kinds of services, incentives, and community supports for work should their program include?

This chapter highlights emerging patterns in the composition, structure, and functioning of the collaboratives, and describes the progress in building an infrastructure. Chapter 5 looks at the kinds of program strategies the collaboratives have begun to implement.

The story these chapters begin to tell is complex and still unfolding. The issues will be examined more closely and critically in subsequent reports, using richer data than were available for this overview.

BUILDING COLLABORATIVES: A WORK IN PROGRESS

As discussed in Chapter 2, the demonstration's designers believed that devolving the responsibility for designing, funding, and operating Jobs-Plus to local partnerships or collaboratives, with many different agencies and residents pooling their special expertise and resources, was a promising way to create an innovative, effective, and sustainable program. Following the requirements set for the demonstration, all the cities included the four mandated partners in their collaboratives: the public housing authority, the welfare department, the JTPA agency, and residents. They also included a variety of other local actors such as community foundations, nonprofit social service and employment and training providers, substance abuse treatment agencies, police departments, child care agencies, transportation agencies, and business representatives or associations (such as the Chamber of Commerce). Many of these are agencies that are likely to serve Jobs-Plus participants in some capacity. Although they do not necessarily bring new dollars to Jobs-Plus, they do bring expertise in addressing work impediments facing many public housing residents.

The demonstration's designers believed that one partner would have to assume a significant leadership role, but the selection of the lead agency

THE JOBS-PLUS COLLABORATIVES

Mandatory partners

- Housing authority
- Welfare department
- JTPA (workforce development) agency
- Residents

Examples of other partners

- Employment and training and social service providers
- Child care agencies
- Local foundations
- Education agencies, public schools, and universities
- Chamber of Commerce
- Religious institutions
- Mayor's office
- Multi-service community-based organizations

was left to the collaboratives themselves. As it turned out, all chose the housing authority, reasoning that it was the agency most directly and intimately involved in the lives of *all* members of the program target group, and that it and the residents had the most to gain or lose from the success or failure of Jobs-Plus. At the same time, the degree to which the housing authority has been the "driving force" in shaping the initiative has varied across the sites.

Slow but identifiable progress

In each site, some of the partners had worked together before, but rarely had they all joined forces in pursuit of such an ambitious *employment* goal.[1] Most employment initiatives for low-income people have been designed and operated primarily *within* single systems (such as the welfare, JTPA, or public housing system) and without the explicit input of the populations they serve. Cross-system referrals are not uncommon, but cross-system design, "ownership," funding, and control are rare. In Jobs-Plus, the collaborating partners in most of the cities are sailing together in uncharted waters.

As in so many community initiatives, this journey has not been easy,[2] and whether the collaboratives will live up to the expectations set for them remains very much an open question. Across the sites, the initial optimism and enthusiasm that greeted the formation of the collaboratives soon gave way to frustration at the slow pace of progress in accomplishing what the partners were brought together to do: design, fund, and implement a Jobs-Plus program suited to the needs and circumstances of their local communities. There were many roadblocks. One was simply the inherent slowness of group decisionmaking among representatives of many independent entities, compounded by the difficulty of convening meetings of busy agency representatives more frequently than once or twice a month. Also, in most sites, full-time Jobs-Plus directors and other staff, who could attend to the myriad tasks involved in planning and launching a complex new program, were not fully in place until 1998 — the second year after the sites had been selected. In some sites, this was the consequence of substantial delays in arranging for funding for these positions and working through the formal, slow-moving hiring procedures of the housing authorities. In addition, as previously mentioned, MDRC's centralized and "reactive" technical assistance was not providing the sites with the depth and timeliness of help they needed.

Feeling that "little was happening," numerous service providers, who expected to serve many residents and were waiting for clear signals on their agencies' roles, drifted away. But most of the key partners stuck with the process, and after a year or more of real struggle, the collaboratives in most sites are very much alive, though not without problems.

The sites can now point to progress, both in developing their own working relationship and in getting some core elements of Jobs-Plus off the ground. They have established structures and practices for shared decisionmaking, hired staff for Jobs-Plus, gotten access to considerable amounts of funding or in-kind resources, implemented some parts of the program while continuing to plan others, and, most important, begun to help residents become employed.

1. Dayton's pre-existing one-stop employment center serving Montgomery County, discussed below, was a noteworthy step already taken in this direction.

2. Aspen Institute, 1997.

Creating governance structures

One of the collaboratives' first tasks was to formulate a workable set of roles, rules, and procedures for guiding the decisionmaking process so that all partners would have a fair opportunity to express their views, but decisions could be made in a reasonably timely manner.

Two basic patterns have emerged. In some sites, considerable authority has been invested in an executive committee or steering group, who meet more regularly and report back to the full collaborative, seeking their input on specific proposals or general directions. In other sites, the full collaborative takes on most issues directly. This may promote a deep sense of involvement and responsibility among all the partners, but it can lengthen the decisionmaking process. In contrast, the steering group approach may trade increased efficiency for a loss of broad representation and tight control by the full collaborative over the direction of the initiative. Perhaps deeper involvement from the full collaborative is most critical early on, when the initiative's overall direction is being planned, than when the focus shifts more toward implementation and ongoing management issues requiring quicker decisionmaking. Indeed, in several Jobs-Plus sites, smaller groups have been given increasing decisionmaking authority.

At various points, most collaboratives have attempted to set up special committees or task groups to divide responsibility for designing the main components of the Jobs-Plus program or to plan other efforts such as program funding, resident recruitment, and special celebrations. In some cases, these committees have been quite productive. In many cases, however, they have not worked well, sometimes because the committee's mission was ill-defined, but also because of the time demands. Some committees barely met at all, and it was not uncommon for the committee structure to be reorganized several times. Committees were often reconstituted, also, as program needs changed and more paid staff were brought on board.

All sites except St. Paul hired a full-time project director to manage the day-to-day planning and implementation of Jobs-Plus. These staff, who are usually on the payroll of the housing authority, also play an important leadership role in the overall collaborative structure, typically organizing and leading the collaborative meetings.

From the beginning, St. Paul has followed what it terms a shared leadership model in which there is no formal delegation of authority to a smaller group or project leader. This choice has been a point of controversy within the collaborative itself, with some partners contending that it is unwieldy and makes it too hard to get pressing issues resolved in a timely enough way.[3]

Involving nonhousing agencies as partners

While the housing authority is the lead agency in all sites, Jobs-Plus has by no means devolved into a housing-authority-only initiative. The other institutional partners have maintained an impressive commitment to the program, actively participating in committees and providing substantial in-kind resources.

In several sites, local foundations have been among the most active partners. In St. Paul, for example, the Wilder Foundation (an "operating" foundation that runs programs and generally does not make grants) has made many contributions such as providing a meeting "facilitator," who

3. For additional information on this issue and the overall experience of the St. Paul collaborative, see Swanson, 1999.

guides the discussions at the collaborative's biweekly meeting. It has also played an active role in the development of various program activities, as have operating foundations in Baltimore (The Enterprise Foundation) and Chattanooga (the Lyndhurst Foundation), along with the Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga. These local foundations have also helped Jobs-Plus build its public profile and develop contacts among employers and other political and community leaders.

The demonstration's designers envisioned that welfare departments and JTPA agencies would be core. In some sites, these agencies have tended to play a narrower role than they might have in the process of designing overall programmatic strategies. Although the pattern varies by site, these agencies have tended to focus most heavily on developing parts of the program that involve them directly in the delivery of services for Jobs-Plus (such as the provision of employment and training, case management, child care, or other services). They have been substantially less involved in the formulation of other aspects of the program such as community supports for work or financial incentive strategies linked to rent reforms.

As previously discussed (see Chapter 2), these major systems are in flux. Under pressure to improve their success in helping hard-to-employ people find and keep jobs and progress toward self-sufficiency, they have a solid rationale for investing in Jobs-Plus. At the same time, the huge challenges they face in implementing radical welfare reforms and (now) an overhaul of the workforce development system in response to recent national legislation have competed for their time and attention.

Involving residents as partners

In Jobs-Plus, a high premium is placed on residents' involvement. The logic is that in order to build a program that is sensibly designed and enjoys widespread resident support and "buy-in," residents' own perspectives on what will work in *their* community must be understood and given great weight. Indeed, this is fundamental to any comprehensive community initiative. As noted by the Aspen Institute Roundtable, "There are very few things that can be accomplished successfully in a neighborhood without resident involvement."[4]

In all sites, resident representatives have participated in the collaborative meetings and subcommittees and have the same formal right as any other partners to speak on the issues being debated. The resident representatives have most commonly been members of the development's existing resident council, a formal body elected by residents to represent their interests to the housing authority on housing and related issues. The resident council is part of each site's collaborative. In several sites, however, a resident "leadership team" that is separate from the resident council or has overlapping membership has been formed to give special attention to Jobs-Plus. In Chattanooga, residents make up a majority of the Jobs-Plus steering committee and were initially paid a stipend by the housing authority for their work on the Jobs-Plus collaborative. St. Paul's resident leadership team is similarly paid a stipend for their participation. Also noteworthy is Seattle's long-term goal of turning over responsibility for the day-to-day operation and management of Jobs-Plus to the resident council.

Typically, resident representatives to the collaboratives have been long-time leaders in their communities. However, they do not necessarily repre-

4. Aspen Institute, 1997, p. 28.

sent the variety of subcommunities found within the resident population. Thus, a challenge for all the collaboratives — and a goal that resident leaders have strongly endorsed — is how to involve other residents in the decisionmaking process for Jobs-Plus.

This has not been easy, but progress is being made as the collaboratives and residents already involved make more concerted efforts to reach out to a broader group. In Seattle, for example, inviting residents from the Asian and East African immigrant groups to be part of Jobs-Plus planning retreats has resulted in their greater involvement in the planning process. In both Seattle and St. Paul, making translation services available for collaborative and other meetings involving residents has also helped achieve more participation from those who do not speak English. And in all sites, all residents have been invited to offer their input in community-wide meetings called from time to time to discuss Jobs-Plus, and in regularly scheduled meetings of the resident council. It is anticipated that more residents will come forward and get involved in the decisionmaking process once a more fully operating program is in place.

Residents' influence

On the whole, residents have had an important effect on the emerging shape of the Jobs-Plus program in most sites, partly because the other partners generally share the belief that residents' involvement is essential. Also, the demonstration's designers made residents' participation as core partners a condition for a site's being in the demonstration, and MDRC has routinely reinforced this message.

This does not mean, of course, that there are no tensions or conflicts within the collaboratives, or that a fully trusting relationship has emerged, or that residents have as much power as they believe they should. Tensions arise, for example, from residents' relationships with the housing authorities. To some extent, this reflects natural landlord-tenant tensions. As the landlord, the housing authority has considerable control over the quality of the residents' living conditions. In some sites, residents have complained of the housing authority's having a history of not living up to its promises to improve those conditions, so they have approached partnership with the housing authority cautiously. At the same time, the housing authority must enforce certain rules and regulations that residents may not always support. For example, the housing authority is legally responsible for enforcing rules prohibiting people from living in its apartments without being on the lease, and for raising the rent when a household's income increases. Moreover, it must enforce rules calling for evictions of whole families when a family member has been involved in drug use, drug selling, or other crimes. It is also bound by strict rules governing how the funds it controls are spent. Thus, from the housing authority's perspective, there are important limits on how far it can go in sharing power with residents. Indeed, early in the demonstration a number of housing authorities urged that MDRC's efforts to promote resident power in the decisionmaking process for Jobs-Plus be more sensitive to these constraints.

In sum, while the relationship between the residents and other partners is on the whole quite good, trust cannot be taken for granted. Building that trust will involve working out a clearer understanding and acceptance of who has legitimate authority over what issues in the decisionmaking process — an ongoing challenge for all the collaboratives. At the same time, residents and housing authority staff (along with other partners) across

all sites have devoted countless hours to the initiative. Despite conflicts and setbacks along the way, their enthusiasm for and commitment to the project run very deep.

Integrating services

It is important to consider not only whether the collaboratives generate inclusive and productive decisionmaking processes, but also whether new forms of collaboration or partnership emerge *on the ground* — that is, at the level of program activities and support services. Are the partners beginning to integrate, adapt, or coordinate their service delivery policies and systems to accommodate the needs and interests of Jobs-Plus?

Movement in this direction is already evident. For example, in several cities the welfare department has agreed with the collaborative that when a resident who is also a welfare recipient participates in certain Jobs-Plus work-related activities, that participation will be counted as satisfying the work-related participation requirements that must be met under TANF rules. This will require close, ongoing coordination by the welfare department and Jobs-Plus to monitor and enforce that participation, and both sets of partners are now jointly developing a set of administrative procedures for doing so.

In another example of service integration, several sites are determining how Jobs-Plus can operate as a special program within the context of a "one-stop" environment, which will become more common under the Workforce Investment Act. Dayton is furthest along here, with that city's having entered the demonstration with a fully functioning one-stop employment center in place.

Across the demonstration cities, welfare departments and other agencies have begun to outstation case managers at the Jobs-Plus developments and, more generally, to work out procedures for referring residents to the agencies providing employment-related services. This has required that the collaboratives begin sorting out how to coordinate their efforts in order to avoid duplicating functions (for example, having a participant report simultaneously to a welfare case manager, a JTPA case manager, a private service-provider case manager, and a Jobs-Plus case manager). In another form of service integration, several sites are developing a common intake form that a variety of agencies will use, as a way to reduce some of the burden on residents involved with multiple agencies. It remains to be seen whether more profound forms of service integration emerge out of the initial small steps — indicating that public and private agencies are able and willing to break out of their traditional service delivery "silos" on behalf of Jobs-Plus.

Clearly, collaboration in Jobs-Plus is a varied and complex experience. Moreover, it appears that the nature and patterns of collaborating are changing as the partners gain experience with this approach and as the balance of their efforts shifts more from planning to operating an ongoing program. Although the story is still unfolding, much has already been learned. Because of the importance of this experience, not only to Jobs-Plus but also to the field of community initiatives in general, MDRC is preparing a more detailed special report on collaboration, which is scheduled to be completed later in 1999.

BUILDING AN INFRASTRUCTURE FOR JOBS-PLUS: FUNDING, STAFFING, AND SPACE

The long gestation period for Jobs-Plus is explained not only by the inevitable complications involved in building new collaboratives and the inherent slowness of this form of group decision-making, but also by the need to solve fundamental problems of infrastructure facing any new program. This includes finding adequate resources to fund the program, defining and filling staff positions to operate it, and arranging for space in which to locate it.

The funding challenge

During the early planning stages of the demonstration, the national designers debated whether to try to raise large amounts of money from national sources to fund much of the operation of the sites' programs. Their decision was *not* to do this — but not simply because of the high cost involved. As previously noted, they believed that Jobs-Plus (if successful) stood a better chance of being expanded and institutionalized as a mainstream program after the demonstration if it were funded with mainstream resources during the demonstration. Moreover, the key collaborating agencies were more likely to feel a sense of ownership over the program and a commitment to help it succeed if they were investing their own resources in it. These considerations were part of the rationale for requiring a collaborative approach in the first place. Therefore, in their applications for Jobs-Plus, each candidate city had to demonstrate that substantial resources would be available to the program through existing mainstream public systems (such as public housing, welfare, and JTPA).

Although the bulk of resources to pay for Jobs-Plus services is coming from these core public systems, most of these locally controlled resources are being offered on an "in-kind" rather than cash basis. For example, the welfare departments, JTPA agencies, and social service providers have pledged to create or give Jobs-Plus participants priority access to a certain number of "slots" in their existing programs. Furthermore, the public housing authorities are dedicating some of their existing staff to Jobs-Plus.

It has been more difficult for the sites to obtain the kind of flexible monies they need to pay for new staff positions for Jobs-Plus or to fund special services that fall outside the usual offerings of the participating agencies. To help address this problem, the demonstration's designers are providing each site with $200,000 for the period of the demonstration. In some cases, local foundations, governments, and public agencies have provided small, flexible grants. At a federal level, the U.S. Department of Labor has awarded small grants to the JTPA or new workforce agencies in each of the demonstration cities to be used exclusively to help the Jobs-Plus program hire job developers.

The sites have also sought and won national, competitively awarded public grants, which they are dedicating fully or in part to Jobs-Plus. Of these, HUD's Economic Development/Social Services (ED/SS) block grants have been most important, ranging in value from $500,000 to $1 million per site. Other resources are coming from grants provided under HUD's Drug Elimination program and resident-controlled Tenant Opportunity Program (TOPS). In addition, several sites have access to funds under federal Welfare-to-Work Grants being administered by the U.S. Department of Labor and made available to states and localities for innovative employment services targeted toward hard-to-employ TANF recipients.

TYPICAL JOBS-PLUS STAFF POSITIONS

A **project director,** usually on the payroll of the housing authority, is assigned full time (or close to it) to Jobs-Plus and is responsible for the day-to-day management of the program. St. Paul does not have such a position.

Case managers are usually either welfare agency staff outstationed at the development by the welfare department or newly hired by the housing authority for Jobs-Plus. They assess residents' employment and training needs, make arrangements for services by particular agencies, monitor residents' use of those services, and help them arrange for support services (such as child care and transportation). Jobs-Plus case managers are also likely to help residents learn about and get access to Jobs-Plus and other financial incentives (including, for example, the Earned Income Tax Credit and new work incentives under TANF) for which they may qualify.

Job developers, who typically are staff members on loan from the local JTPA system, help residents locate job openings and, in some cases, help them file applications and prepare for job interviews.

Outreach workers and community organizers are usually people (often residents themselves) newly hired for Jobs-Plus and placed on the payroll of the housing authority. It is their responsibility to reach out to and help mobilize the resident community to become involved in the program and in work. They may also assist in providing instruction in job search techniques and organize support groups designed to help residents become employed, keep their jobs, and progress to better jobs.

When all in-kind and direct resources are counted, the sites have so far achieved funding commitments well in excess of $1 million per site. Extra dollars are also expected from HUD to cover the potential costs of rent reductions instituted as part of the financial incentives component of Jobs-Plus (see Chapter 5). However, the sites' budgets for the duration of the demonstration are substantially larger than the monies now available, and they are continuing to seek additional resources.

Staffing Jobs-Plus

Staffing structures for Jobs-Plus vary across the sites but typically include a project director and several line staff, who work directly with residents (see left column). Some of these staff are employees of the housing authority, while others may be "on loan" from another city agency. Residents themselves fill some of these positions (especially that of outreach worker), as well as certain clerical positions (such as administrative assistant or receptionist). In all sites, a full — or nearly full — complement of staff is now in place, although, as previously noted, most Jobs-Plus staff were not in place until the second year of the demonstration. In addition, when new staff were brought on board, their positions were often not well defined. Thus, considerable time has been needed for staff to clarify basic staff roles and administrative procedures.

Housing Jobs-Plus

It is universally accepted across the sites that, as a place-based initiative, Jobs-Plus must have a strong physical presence within each of the targeted developments. At a minimum, there should be a Jobs-Plus office or resource center that provides a convenient place for Jobs-Plus staff and residents to meet, and for residents to meet among

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themselves. In addition, an on-site office would make it easier for staff to feel like and be seen as a vital part of the community they would be serving.

The Jobs-Plus planners also believed that at least some Jobs-Plus activities and support services must be provided on site in order to achieve "saturation-level" participation in work-promoting activities. Recruiting residents to become involved in Jobs-Plus would be more successful, for example, if residents could be invited to a center they saw as a familiar place right within their neighborhood, and one that they could easily walk to with their children. An on-site presence may be especially advantageous for recruiting residents who feel socially isolated and timid about traveling to agencies and service providers outside their housing development. (It has also been argued, though, that residents' participation in off-site services is important preparation for work that will require travel outside the development.) On-site facilities also make it convenient to offer Jobs-Plus case management and other activities and services during off hours — for example, at night and on weekends. This flexibility helps accommodate the schedules of working residents (who, for example, might benefit from acquiring more basic education or developing basic computer skills) or residents whose family obligations make it difficult to meet with staff or take part in education or other activities beyond normal business hours. And on-site or nearby child care is a valuable asset for residents needing reliable and convenient child care in order to work.[5]

On-site service delivery would offer other advantages as well, such as enabling staff to view the daily realities of residents' lives and circumstances that might impede the success of the Jobs-Plus program, perhaps giving staff insights into how to strengthen it. There would also be more opportunities to involve residents (including some, such as senior citizens, who might not be seeking work for themselves) in the delivery of services and in providing more informal encouragement, guidance, and other forms of community support for work to their neighbors (see Chapter 5). And it would allow residents who are in Jobs-Plus leadership roles more opportunities to monitor and influence the quality of the services.

For all these reasons, acquiring locations for a Jobs-Plus office and for on-site services quickly became a high priority in all sites. In some sites, this meant adapting and reconfiguring space in existing community centers or other facilities to suit the needs of Jobs-Plus. In other sites, apartment units were taken off-line and remodeled into office space. Negotiating for these spaces and the resources to make them suitable for Jobs-Plus took considerable time and staff attention in several sites and contributed to delays in implementing the program. In almost all cases, these modifications are now complete.

5. In a study of families living in public housing, Robins (1988) found that those living in developments with relatively large on-site child care centers had better employment, earnings, and welfare outcomes than similar families in developments with no or relatively small centers.

Chapter 5

Services, Incentives, and Supports for Work: Emerging Visions and Practices

THIS chapter describes how the seven sites have begun to transform Jobs-Plus from an idea in the minds of the demonstration's designers to a reality in the field in the two years since their selection for the demonstration. As will quickly become apparent, designing and implementing a new package of job search, education, training, and support services aimed at all working-age residents in a housing development would have been challenge enough. Adding the two other components of Jobs-Plus — new financial work incentives and community supports for work — increased the challenge several-fold. This, along with the complexities of building a new decisionmaking collaborative and getting a program infrastructure in place, helps explain why a fully formed, fully operational program is still to come.

For these reasons, any description of the Jobs-Plus program at this point in time will necessarily say more about its potential than its actual accomplishments in helping residents succeed in the labor market. Nonetheless, the sites have made progress in laying the programmatic groundwork, as this chapter will illustrate. They have also begun placing residents into jobs. For example, according to site-reported data covering the period from the start of the program through March 1999, nearly 1,200 residents across all eight developments had passed through some kind of registration or intake process for Jobs-Plus, about 800 had participated in a job search activity, 200 had participated in an education activity, more than 200 had taken part in skills training, and more than 400 had been placed in a job by the program.

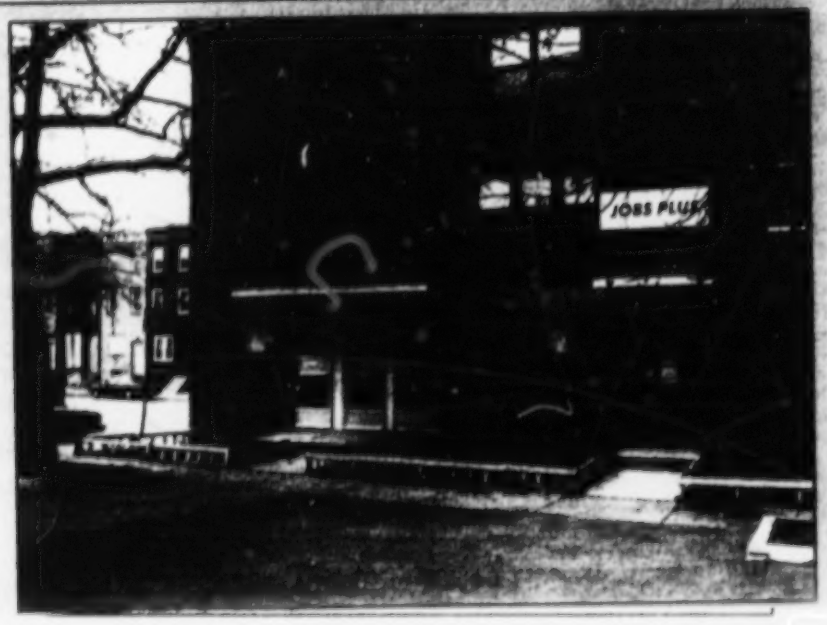
This chapter describes the emerging strategies for each of the three program components: employment and training activities, financial incentives, and community supports for work. In addition, to provide a more rounded picture of Jobs-Plus in the field, it includes a brief profile of each site's program as it looked in the spring of 1999. The chapter ends with a summary of the next steps in the evaluation's efforts to document and assess the program's strategies and accomplishments.

EMPLOYMENT-RELATED ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES

It is important to note that not all the activities and services used by Jobs-Plus residents will be new. Many will be activities that are already provided as part of the normal offerings of the welfare department, JTPA (and the workforce development system that is replacing it), community-based organizations, schools and community colleges, and, in some cases, the housing authority's existing education and employment programs. Jobs-Plus staff may refer residents to those agencies, help get them enrolled, monitor their attendance and progress, and help address problems that may interfere with successful participation. In other cases, residents will participate in activities or use services created or adapted especially for Jobs-Plus, such as on-site or off-site job clubs, motivational workshops, individual job search assistance, basic education courses, work experience positions, on-site child care, and so on.

JOBS-PLUS IN BALTIMORE

Gilmor Homes



TWO units in Gilmor Homes were remodeled to house the Jobs-Plus offices and jobs resource center. Staffed by a resident aide and a job developer, the center provides job listings, guides for writing résumés, and Internet access. On-site job search workshops include one targeted toward men.

All residents who express interest in Jobs-Plus receive a one-on-one orientation and are assigned an on-site Jobs-Plus case manager. They are also assessed to determine their first steps in the program. Welfare recipients who are considered ready to work meet with their case managers monthly and maintain a monthly diary of their job search and work preparation activities. Residents who find work maintain regular post-employment contact with their Jobs-Plus case managers. This method of case management, modeled after elements of the Pathways Program created by Chicago's Project Match, is intended to help residents not only find work but also adapt to workplace demands and a working lifestyle. For residents not on welfare, the program offers assessment, case management, referrals, job search, training programs, and post-placement/referral follow-up.

A major program theme is improving the health of the entire Gilmor Homes community, including the removal of health-related barriers to employment. Jobs-Plus has initiated a community-wide health promotion campaign in conjunction with the Vision for Health Consortium (VFHC). This consortium of public and private organizations addresses health concerns at the individual, family, and community levels. At VFHC's on-site office, residents who are registered with Jobs-Plus can obtain a family or individual health assessment, with referrals to providers. Substance abuse has been a recent focus of activity. Plans are being laid for a foster care training program, which will enable residents to care for neighbors' children when parents seek inpatient drug treatment.

Baltimore has set up an innovative work experience program. Positions have been established for up to 20 residents at a time with a number of Jobs-Plus collaborative partners who are serving program participants. The partners have agreed to provide these positions for one to three years, and the housing authority has agreed to pay the residents' salaries and benefits. These residents are expected to gain valuable work experience while also assisting other residents using the agencies' services. The work experience program can thus contribute to Baltimore's community support for work component. An on-site community organizer coordinates Jobs-Plus's community supports for work activities with the resident council and resident leadership team. She is assisted by two residents hired through the work experience program.

For its financial incentives component, Baltimore has proposed a rent restructuring plan that would reduce the percentage of countable income used to calculate working families' rent from the traditional 30 percent to 20 percent. This reduction is coupled with ceiling rents that cap rent increases at reasonable levels. •

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Quick employment, soft-skills instruction, and job development

Across the sites, residents are being encouraged to find work as quickly as feasible and are offered various kinds of assistance intended to help them do so. As in most welfare-to-work programs, individual job search guidance or group-based job clubs, which teach basic job-hunting and interviewing techniques, are core features of Jobs-Plus in all sites. (Many residents who are TANF recipients participate in such activities as part of their welfare-to-work program assignments.) Instruction and guidance are also being offered (sometimes as part of the job clubs) on what are sometimes referred to as "soft" employment skills, including understanding employers' expectations and appropriate workplace behavior (such as arriving on time, reporting absences, dressing appropriately, and managing relationships with supervisors and coworkers). In addition, the sites are trying to make listings of job openings easily available to residents. Many are providing access to computers (at the Jobs-Plus resource centers) through which residents can search through job vacancies posted on the Internet.

How these job preparation and job search services are or will be provided varies across sites in important ways. For example, St. Paul and Seattle are working with organizations experienced in serving a variety of racial and ethnic groups to devise culturally appropriate ways of offering employment guidance to diverse immigrant groups with limited English-speaking skills. They have also gone to considerable lengths to meet with residents from these groups — holding discussions in many languages with the help of translators — to learn how best to meet their needs. Chattanooga, where almost all the residents are African-American, has been developing a soft-skills training curriculum that responds to issues of particular relevance to that group. The training will be provided by other trained residents under the auspices of a new resident-operated, for-profit entity called The Tubman Group (discussed later in the section on entrepreneurship). Baltimore is implementing a strategy that combines short-term training with meaningful work experience and intensive case management. Modeled after a similar approach pioneered by the Chicago-based Project Match in a Chicago public housing development,[1] it requires a long-term commitment from participants — as much as three to five years — in the expectation that many will lose their initial jobs and experience other setbacks on their journey toward self-sufficiency.

To supplement residents' individual efforts to locate job openings, the Jobs-Plus program offers the assistance of professional job developers. These staff attempt to identify employers who are looking to hire workers in positions for which Jobs-Plus participants would be suitable. They also try to generate special employment opportunities by encouraging certain employers to recruit workers directly from the Jobs-Plus program as soon as new vacancies occur.

Education and training

Although Jobs-Plus will encourage relatively quick employment, that is not its only objective. The program will also attempt to improve residents' human capital and prospects for job mobility by making it easier for them to take part in education and training activities — but in ways that do not keep them out of the labor market for a long time. Higher priority is thus

1. Herr, Wagner, and Halpern, 1996.

JOBS-PLUS IN CHATTANOOGA

Harriet Tubman Homes

MOST of Chattanooga's Jobs-Plus activities revolve around the Jobs-Plus Resource Center. Residents make up half the center's staff, and they perform a variety of duties, including outreach to the general resident population. Jobs-Plus orientations are held twice daily to accommodate residents' varying schedules. A full orientation runs two hours a day for five consecutive days. At orientation's end, residents outline their short- and long-term goals in plans for "family and community enrichment."

After orientation, participants who are welfare recipients work on site with a welfare case manager, a job coach, and a resident "community counselor" to design an individualized program of training or employment that also meets state TANF requirements. Other participants are assigned a job coach and a community counselor, who help them choose from a menu of work-related activities.

One option for all Jobs-Plus participants is a soft-skills program offered by the resident-run Tubman Group (see page 41). This program emphasizes employability skills and training in personal management (for example, how to control anger and resolve conflict in the workplace). The Tubman Group intends to work with Jobs-Plus staff and two of Chattanooga's major private employment agencies to arrange job placement opportunities for residents who complete the soft-skills curriculum. Other on-site training options include basic education instruction, certified nurse assistant classes, an introduction to entrepreneurship, and construction trades. Off-site options include training (by Jobs-Plus partners) in office technology, customer service, and vehicular transport, and a construction practicum.

Residents who seek immediate employment, or who want to combine employment with one of the above training activities, are referred directly to job search activities or a job club. The Resource Center has space reserved for these activities and for a computer lab, which will give residents instant access to employment listings maintained by Chattanooga's Private Industry Council (PIC) and Tennessee's Department of Employment Security (DES).

Several residents have moved toward community support for work by organizing peer support groups. For example, participants in one of the certified nurse assistant programs formed a study group. For a small stipend, other residents provide child care for neighbors participating in activities at the Resource Center. Monthly Jobs-Plus revivals, inspired by African-American church traditions, have given Jobs-Plus participants an opportunity to jointly celebrate individual successes and group achievements.

Chattanooga's rent incentives plan reduces the rent of working residents to 10 percent of countable income for 16 months, and to 20 percent thereafter. The earnings of dependents aged 18 to 24 are disregarded in rent calculations. At the suggestion of residents, Chattanooga's plan also includes a deduction for transportation expenses and an exemption from "excess" utility payments (that is, for utility use beyond that normally covered by the housing authority).

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being given to shorter-term training options, and to opportunities to work and participate in education or training concurrently (for example, working during the day and attending classes at night or on weekends). This will be easier to accomplish where the education and training opportunities are located on site. Realizing this, many of the sites are organizing part-time, on-site basic education classes and offering these outside normal business hours.

Work experience and on-the-job training opportunities

Not all residents will be able to qualify for or perform well at jobs without some prior work experience. Others, such as those with criminal records, may face special difficulty getting hired. Still others may have certain physical or personal limitations that would allow them to work only in specially supervised settings. Work experience opportunities can be an important way for residents to earn money and acquire valuable training and a work résumé. For these reasons, several sites are exploring new ways of creating work opportunities as a step toward regular, permanent employment.

Baltimore's efforts here are particularly noteworthy. One strategy has been to develop work experience positions for a total of up to 20 residents at a time at the offices of a number of service-providing organizations that are part of the Jobs-Plus collaborative. They agree to take on a Jobs-Plus participant for one to three years, and the housing authority (using ED/SS funds) pays the participant's salary and benefits. The residents chosen for these positions should gain valuable work experience, and also be in a position to help other Jobs-Plus residents using the services of those agencies — which is part of Baltimore's vision for its community support for work component. A second strategy, still being refined, is targeted toward TANF recipients and noncustodial parents and is funded out of Baltimore City's federal Welfare-to-Work Grant. This will involve placing residents into positions at private companies for six months, with the housing authority (or another partner) again paying their salary and benefits, following six months of work preparation and training customized to suit the needs of the employer. It is expected that at the end of this one-year training and trial employment sequence, the employers will hire the participants as regular employees.

Entrepreneurship

New work opportunities can also be created by helping residents start their own businesses. Although this is not a core program strategy for Jobs-Plus (because it is likely to be a suitable option for only a small number of residents), the sites are looking for ways to support and foster resident entrepreneurship.

Perhaps most common are plans for home child care businesses. These promise both to create jobs for residents and to provide other residents with a valued service — easily accessible child care. Several sites have already helped some residents obtain the training and certification that qualifies them to provide daycare within their own homes. To support these efforts, some housing authorities are helping residents bring their apartments into compliance with building and health codes that home-care providers must meet. Plans are under way in Seattle, for example, to build fences around the yards of some residents in order to meet home certification requirements. Licensing and liability issues are obstacles being addressed at other sites.

In Chattanooga, a number of residents are

JOBS-PLUS IN CLEVELAND

Woodhill Homes Estates

BELIEVING that on-site services are key to involving as many residents as possible in Jobs-Plus, the Cleveland program opened the Family Resources Network Center (FRNC) at Woodhill Homes Estates in early 1998. Other housing units have since been taken off-line and renovated for use by Jobs-Plus. The FRNC and these other facilities are expected to become a hub for Jobs-Plus program activities.

The FRNC provides office space for two residents hired as community organizers (to recruit other residents and help maintain their involvement in Jobs-Plus) and a site coordinator, who supervises the resident organizers and coordinates all on-site services. The Jobs-Plus project director will also maintain an office at Woodhill Homes Estates as well as off site at the housing authority's central offices.

A state-of-the-art computer lab is due to open soon. In addition, staff from several private agencies are providing on-site (or will soon offer) such activities as GED (high school equivalency) classes, job readiness training, and job placement services. They will also link residents to the agencies' larger, off-site facilities.

One provider will offer job readiness and placement services tailored to the needs of residents with alcohol and drug problems, and the housing authority, in collaboration with other agencies, has established an on-site drop-in center to help such residents. Plans call for appropriate residents to be referred to the center, and for those who come to the center first to be referred to Jobs-Plus.

Residents who are welfare recipients and receive employment-related case management services through the county's welfare department will continue to do so. However, in cooperation with that agency, several welfare-to-work case managers (or "self-sufficiency coaches") have been stationed part time at Woodhill Homes Estates—an important step toward coordinating the county's welfare-to-work services with Jobs-Plus. Residents who are not receiving welfare will be assigned to other on-site case managers, who will be hired by Jobs-Plus.

The Cleveland program has begun to shape a vision of community support for work built on informal peer-group activities. As a start, small groups of residents have gathered to share their concerns about entering the world of work and to learn from the experiences of employed residents. To increase the self-confidence of residents who believe that enhancing their physical health and personal appearance will assist them in obtaining employment, residents have also organized a weekly exercise class for women.

All working residents, whether receiving TANF or not, will be eligible to participate in a Jobs-Plus rent incentives plan. Cleveland's plan, which is not yet final, calls for significant portions of residents' earned income to be disregarded for two years when rents are calculated. The housing authority has proposed to set rents thereafter at 25 percent of residents' countable income rather than the traditional 30 percent. ♦

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being trained to work in and eventually own a donated private child care facility, which would serve Jobs-Plus residents as well as people from the larger community. In Chattanooga, Dayton, and Seattle, several residents have already completed the requirement to become certified child care providers. The most ambitious entrepreneurial effort under way is Chattanooga's Tubman Group (see below).

THE TUBMAN GROUP: A RESIDENT-OPERATED TRAINING ENTERPRISE

In Chattanooga, seven women residents of Harriet Tubman Homes (the Jobs-Plus development) have formed The Tubman Group to provide employment-related "soft-skills" instruction to Jobs-Plus participants and, eventually, to participants in other programs. Its work with residents who are TANF recipients is being paid for under a contract with the Tennessee Department of Human Services. Contracts with local temporary employment agencies, hospitals, and other organizations are also being explored. The group is expanding and will eventually become an independent business owned by residents. To help it operate as a successful, professional enterprise, the Kenan Institute of the Business School at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is advising it on marketing, business management, and a training curriculum. In addition, the Business Administration School of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga is providing office and training space along with day-to-day business development support.

A wide array of support services

Jobs-Plus will offer a full range of support services that help residents to participate in job preparation and employment activities and to work steadily. Across the sites, the most common services being provided or planned include the following:

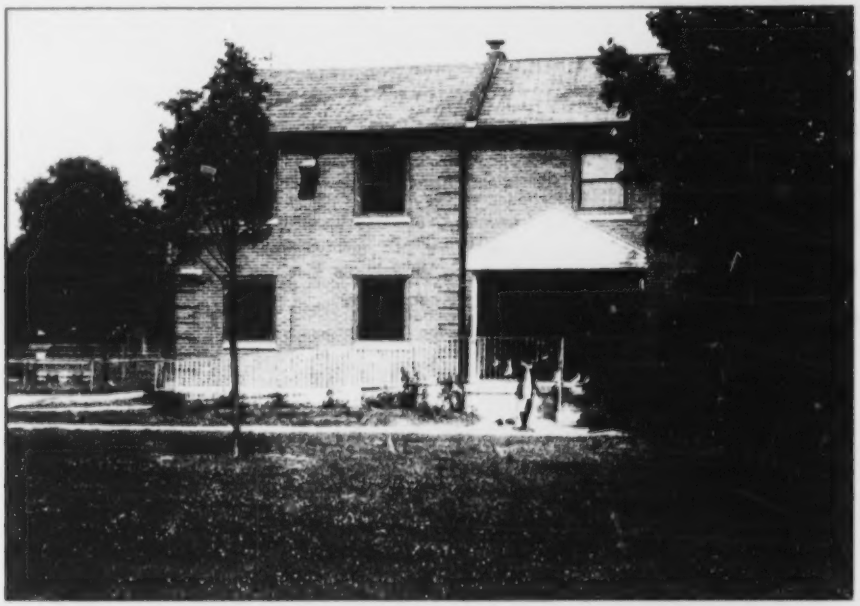
- **Child care.** Assistance with child care is central, and, as previously mentioned, the sites are devoting considerable resources and energy to increasing residents' access to affordable care, including "second shift" care.

- **Transportation.** Finding a reliable means of getting to and from a job is another acute problem. Often public housing developments are located far from areas of job growth, commonly in places where accessing public transportation — particularly after dark — is unsafe or where the service, especially during evenings and weekends, is quite limited. Several Jobs-Plus sites are working with public transit authorities and other groups to find solutions to this problem. Some are working to establish van pools, which will provide needed transportation services and also create employment for residents who get hired as drivers. For residents with access to a car but no driver's license, St. Paul provides driver education and behind-the-wheel training; other sites also hope to increase enrollment in driver education programs. The sites are also helping eligible residents take advantage of TANF or other public grants for emergency car repairs.

- **Substance abuse treatment.** Drug and alcohol abuse is another impediment to reaching very high employment levels. Substance abuse problems exist in all sites, but are perhaps most acute in Baltimore, where heroin use is widespread; in Dayton, where crack use has been significant; and in Cleveland and Los Angeles, where drug problems are reported to be considerable. Residents with substance abuse problems are probably among the hardest to get involved in Jobs-Plus, and those who do come forward may risk losing job opportunities by failing drug screening tests required by some

JOBS-PLUS IN DAYTON

DeSoto Bass Courts



A distinguishing feature of Dayton's program is its alliance with Montgomery County's "one-stop" Job Center — a huge, multi-service center housing numerous social service and employment agencies under one roof. Residents of DeSoto Bass Courts are now able to access the services offered by those agencies directly through Jobs-Plus, which functions as a kind of satellite office to the one-stop facility. Indeed, the partners who formed the one-stop center saw Jobs-Plus as an opportunity to better reach public housing residents.

At DeSoto Bass Courts, a Jobs-Plus Center was established to house on-site Jobs-Plus services and activities. These include an Urban League job readiness program — a series of workshops that cover résumé-writing and basic job search skills, and that also address issues of domestic violence and substance abuse, which present serious obstacles to sustained employment. An on-site job developer helps locate job openings for residents, and three on-site case managers conduct assessments of their employment service needs, refer them to the appropriate services, and monitor their participation and progress.

On the lower level of the Jobs-Plus Center is the Job Resource Computer Learning Center, which will soon be run by the program's job developer and Resource Center specialist (a position filled by a resident). This center will provide a direct computer link to the one-stop's own on-line Job Bank, an electronic posting of all employment opportunities listed by Dayton-area employers. The center will also provide access to computer software for preparing résumés and opportunities to learn such skills as word processing and using the Internet.

The Jobs-Plus Center also houses the new Jobs-Plus Youth Program — an after-school program offering recreational activities and homework assistance for the children of Jobs-Plus participants. This is an important support for working parents. The program has a component for older youths wanting after-school and summer jobs. In addition to establishing this institutional community support for work, Dayton plans to hire residents to reach out to others to encourage and support their participation in Jobs-Plus. It is also now recruiting "building captains" throughout the development to play a similar role, paying them a stipend in the form of a rent credit. Other ideas include proposals for emergency child care and emergency transportation for parents who must work second shifts.

Dayton is proposing a flat rent approach as the core of its work incentives plan. A working resident would face a series of rent increases over a period of years until a final rent level is reached. Dayton's plan also calls for the housing authority to subsidize the cost of health insurance for workers who take a job with no health benefits. Rent credits (up to $599 per year) will be available to residents who volunteer for community service, including efforts that help support the employment of other residents.♦

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employers. Staff are attempting to identify such residents early in the Jobs-Plus intake and assessment process and to make referrals for treatment either before or concurrently with their participation in other job preparation activities.

• Domestic abuse services. Women who are victims of domestic violence and abuse are a special concern in Jobs-Plus. Their traumatic domestic experiences can divert them from seeking work, make it tough for them to show up every day and on time, and undermine their productivity. There is also concern that seeking work may precipitate some incidences of abuse, if a woman's partner believes that the independence, diversion, and new social contacts she gains from employment will change the relationship in ways he cannot accept. For Jobs-Plus, this means establishing good referral networks between the program and organizations that can provide appropriate counseling and support, and training staff to be alert to the need for such assistance. The sites have started planning such efforts or intend to do so in the coming year.

Voluntary vs. mandatory participation

All the sites have chosen to make participation in Jobs-Plus voluntary for residents. Some parties within some of the collaboratives argued for tying cooperation with the program to continued eligibility to live in the development, believing that this might help achieve the very high rates of program participation and employment to which Jobs-Plus aspires. Legal, ethical, and practical considerations have kept these ideas from blossoming into serious proposals or plans. However, many residents are already subject to TANF participant mandates, which they may be able to fulfill, at least to some extent, by participating in Jobs-Plus. In addition, in most sites access to the Jobs-Plus rent-based financial work incentives will be conditioned on some form of participation in Jobs-Plus activities.

Serving men who are not on the lease

Many of the sites have struggled with the question of whether Jobs-Plus should try to serve men who are involved in the lives of families at the developments and may even live with them, but are not on the family's lease agreement. Typically these men are the boyfriends of female residents and often the fathers of their children. Some Jobs-Plus planners have argued that involving these men in the program may help the men help their families, emotionally and financially. Moreover, ignoring them or shutting them out of the program might lead them to act against the women's involvement in it. Indeed, with respect to many of the women, the support of the men may be crucial to the program's success.

Ideas for involving such men range from offering support groups to providing them with a full range of Jobs-Plus employment services. It might seem that this difficult issue can be resolved by simply including the men in the lease agreement, but several concerns have arisen. Some women, for example, fear that by adding the men to the lease, they would forfeit control over their own lives. At the same time, many of the men may not want to incur the possible financial and other obligations of becoming a leaseholder. Nevertheless, the sites are continuing to explore options for including some of the men in the program as a way to promote family formation, bolster the presence of male role models, and achieve the economic advantages of two-earner households.

JOBS-PLUS IN LOS ANGELES (1) Imperial Courts

Los Angeles is the only site with a Jobs-Plus program operating in two housing developments. It is administered as a single program but is tailored to the developments' different populations and circumstances. The project director works out of the housing authority's downtown office but spends considerable time at each location.

At each development, a Jobs-Plus office has been set up to provide meeting space and work areas for the program's on-site case managers, job developers, community organizers, and administrative staff. At William Mead Homes, this office is located in the Mead Community Center (which is slated for reconstruction). At Imperial Courts, the office is in a housing unit adjacent to the offices of other social service programs, which are now being coordinated with Jobs-Plus.

Job counseling and case management are central to Los Angeles's Jobs-Plus program. The case managers (some of whom are residents) assess residents' need for employment-related assistance and support services, and then refer them to appropriate providers or directly to employers known to have job openings. An on-site job developer in each office works closely with the case managers in determining suitable job placements for residents and in developing job leads for them to draw upon. In addition, linkages are being established between Jobs-Plus and the state's Employment Service, which will provide first access to new job orders available on their statewide computerized job bank. Plans also call for welfare department employment specialists to be out-stationed in each Jobs-Plus office to provide residents who are required to participate in the county's welfare-to-work (GAIN) program with a range of employment and support services.

Jobs-Plus participants have access to a range of employment-related activities and services. Some are operated directly by the housing authority in many different developments and are now being incorporated into or coordinated with Jobs-Plus at the two developments in the demonstration. Others are existing services in the community provided by public and not-for-profit organizations that are part of the Jobs-Plus collaborative.

The recently opened Jobs-Plus computer learning centers at William Mead Homes and Imperial Courts offer on-site, computer-assisted basic education instruction as well as instruction on a variety of computer software packages. The center operates on a drop-in basis but also offers more structured courses.

Classes in naturalization and English as a second language (ESL) are a special feature of the Jobs-Plus program at William Mead Homes, where many residents are immigrants. Numerous on-site activities are offered in Spanish as well as English.

JOBS-PLUS IN LOS ANGELES (2) William Mead Homes

Through Jobs-Plus, Imperial Courts has obtained funds to build an on-site child care center, which will provide 100 subsidized child care slots. The center will be operated in partnership with a private child care provider, starting in a temporary location while a permanent facility is being built. Jobs-Plus expects to place several residents into child care careers at this new center. At William Mead Homes, several residents have been training as child care providers through Jobs-Plus and are being supported in starting up in-home child care businesses.

At both developments, the housing authority operates an on-site substance abuse program, which offers prevention counseling and referrals for treatment. Because substance abuse is a critical employment barrier, these programs will now be overseen by Jobs-Plus to ensure close coordination between the two initiatives.

At William Mead Homes, Jobs-Plus conducts what have been dubbed "super search" job clubs on a twice-weekly basis. A similar program is being launched at Imperial Courts. The program follows an open-entry/open-exit format rather than a sequence of classes with firm start and end dates. The curriculum covers job readiness and résumé-writing. In contrast to typical job clubs, these include working residents as well as job seekers, and the sessions focus on topics related to job retention and wage progression as well as job search.

These job clubs also function as a kind of peer support group for residents who are already employed or preparing for work. As such, they contribute to the program's community support for work efforts. In order to heighten the visibility of resident role models, residents will be trained to lead these sessions.

Imperial Courts has begun operating a Time Dollar program as a key community support for work initiative. This is a kind of service-bartering system developed by the Time Dollar Institute of Washington, D.C. Residents who participate by performing services for other residents (for example, child care, grocery shopping, or car repair) will earn one "time dollar" for each hour they donate. These time dollars can then be used to "buy" services from other participating residents.

Los Angeles has proposed a rent incentives plan that will freeze the rents of working residents for 18 months. Afterwards, the long-term application of flat rents will reduce the link between earned income and rent. Residents will no longer be "penalized" (by seeing their rent rise) for working longer hours, earning higher wages, or sending more than one family member into the workforce.

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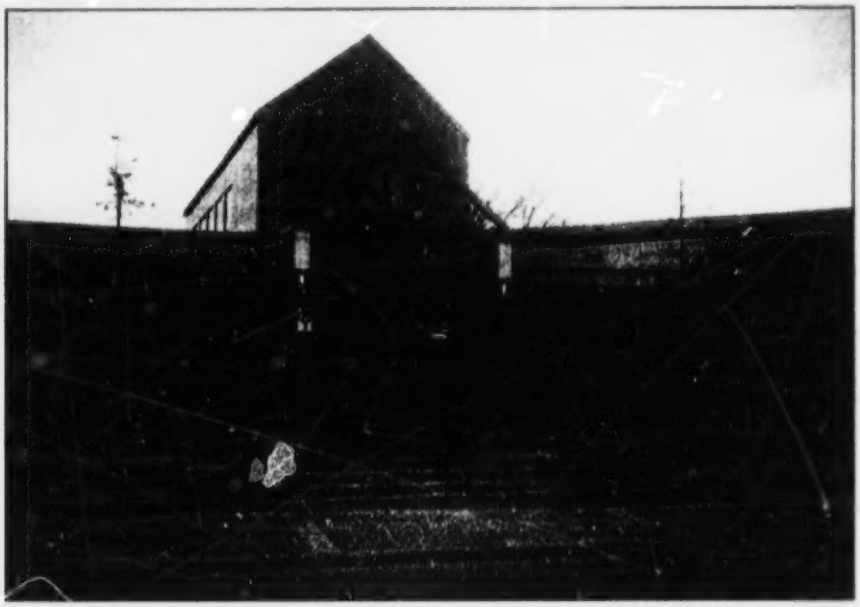
JOBS-PLUS IN ST. PAUL

Mt. Airy Homes



St. Paul has built its Jobs-Plus program on existing employment and training services such as job fairs, work-related assessments, case management, and instruction on such topics as résumé-writing, preparation for job interviews, and "life skills" (including budgeting, nutrition, and information about work-appropriate attire). These services are now part of — and are being expanded under — Jobs-Plus, which includes new initiatives as well.

Most of St. Paul's Jobs-Plus activities are provided on site at the Mt. Airy Community Center, which has been reconfigured and dedicated for this purpose. The community center also houses classrooms for basic education courses, driver education, training in home-based child care, a tutoring program for youth, and family counseling services. It contains a career resource center (with on-line access to a county-wide database of job openings called Job Link) and a computer education lab with Internet access, staffed by a licensed adult basic education teacher. In addition, it includes a child care center that Jobs-Plus participants who are employed or in training can use on a sliding-fee basis. After-school and summer care are available for children 12 years old or younger.

Jobs-Plus offers the development's large population of immigrants (many of them Hmong refugee families from Laos) access to other services that can enhance their potential for employment as well as their overall adjustment to life in America. These include classes in English as a second language (ESL), parenting sessions tailored to their cultural backgrounds, and special tutoring programs.

A single case management team serves all participants — those who are receiving welfare payments and those who are not. Three Jobs-Plus partners (the Ramsey County welfare department, the St. Paul Public Schools, and the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation) have contributed financial workers and employment counselors. Financial workers offer information on welfare, child care, and other benefits. Employment counselors help residents develop employment and education plans, address barriers to success, access specialized training, and find jobs.

The Jobs-Plus staff have also created customized training programs with employers (for example, training to become a certified nursing assistant) and have expanded relationships between the program and employers through cooperation with the St. Paul Chamber of Commerce.

In order to encourage the development of community support for work within the development's ethnically diverse community, steps have been taken to increase residents' interaction across ethnic lines. Potluck dinners, cultural events, and community get-togethers help neighbors connect with each other on a regular basis.

The first stage of St. Paul's rent incentives plan for Jobs-Plus has already begun. Within the first six months of implementation, 191 of 298 families received one month's free rent for enrolling in Jobs-Plus and became eligible for a 100 percent disregard of earned income in the calculation of their regular monthly rent. The next stage of the incentives plan is still being formulated. ♦

FINANCIAL INCENTIVES: MAKING WORK PAY

Employment and training activities may help prepare public housing residents for work, but that may not be enough to get large numbers of them into jobs and working steadily — especially if the available jobs pay low wages and offer few or no fringe benefits. Under current rent rules, as residents' earnings grow, their rent increases; for those receiving welfare and Food Stamps, higher earnings may cause a reduction in those benefits. Child care costs, transportation expenses, and taxes can also eat away at the potential gains from employment. Traditionally, for many residents, working yielded little economic improvement or even resulted in an actual loss of income.

The disincentives facing public housing residents who are also welfare recipients have been moderated in many states by the new welfare-based work incentives and other policies, as discussed below. Still, public housing families (whether or not they receive welfare) would benefit less by increasing their earnings than would families living in unsubsidized housing because the ensuing rise in their rent would, in effect, "tax away" part of their earnings gain. The Jobs-Plus financial incentives component will help reduce that disparity.[2]

Understanding the economic consequences of working

Each collaborative has designed or is designing its own package of incentives, with some guidance from MDRC. Before Jobs-Plus began, MDRC made a detailed assessment of how much it did or did not pay for public housing residents to work under existing rent, welfare, tax, and other rules. This meant estimating residents' income from earnings, welfare, Food Stamps, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), and the Child and Dependent Care Credit, and their expenditures for rent, child care, transportation, and income taxes (see below). Net income was compared under different scenarios — for example, for residents who were not working, working part time, or working full time; working at different wage rates; and with different-size families. The conclusion was that residents faced significant financial disincentives to work.

COMPUTING AFTER-RENT NET INCOME

Earnings
+ Welfare
+ Food Stamps
+ Earned Income Tax Credit
+ Child and Dependent Care Credit
- Rent
- Child care
- Transportation
- Income taxes

Net income

Many states, however, have adopted new financial incentives as part of their TANF plans, with recipients typically being allowed to keep more of their welfare benefits when they work — at least until they reach their time limit on benefits. (At that point, income might fall precipitously. But without welfare as an alternative, the advantage of working over not working may grow.) Many states have also increased subsidized child care funds for low-income workers. Combined with increases in the EITC during the mid-1990s, these changes

2. The Quality of Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 calls for housing authorities to develop rent reforms that will reduce the work disincentives facing residents under current rules. These reforms are slated to go into effect beginning October 1999.

JOBS-PLUS IN SEATTLE

Rainier Vista

THE Rainier Vista Job Resource Center — the hub of Jobs-Plus activity in Seattle — houses a team of job coaches and a job developer. The coaches introduce residents to Jobs-Plus and handle all the intake and assessment activities, including evaluation of language skills. The job developer works with employers to find suitable positions for residents, and the job coaches try to help those who have found jobs retain them. Because many Rainier Vista residents are recent immigrants from Asia and Africa, the program has had to arrange for translation services or to use staff who are multilingual.

All program participants have access to a bank of personal computers that were purchased with a grant from the City of Seattle and have been installed in the Job Resource Center. The software includes word-processing packages for cover letters and résumés, tutorials for typing and office skills, and English as a second language (ESL) exercises. Every Wednesday evening is "paperwork night": Residents bring in job applications, immigration forms, or official letters, and staff help them to understand the content and draft responses.

Residents with limited proficiency in English can enroll in job clubs organized by the Refugee Women's Alliance, an organization that is within walking distance of the development and has special expertise in serving immigrants. Alternatively, these residents can request that a job coach help them with an independent job search. Residents who are proficient in English are referred to a "personal effectiveness training course" conducted at the Job Resource Center. This activity, which has no set duration, introduces residents to employers' expectations and appropriate workplace behavior. Topics such as time management, finding appropriate child care, and dealing with personal emergencies are also covered.

The effort to build the Jobs-Plus community support for work component is being led by the resident council, also known as the Rainier Vista Leadership Team. As one strategy, the team has proposed instituting a Time Dollar services bartering program among residents (see page 45). Several Rainier Vista residents have received certification as child care providers, and the Seattle Housing Authority has agreed to pay for fences and other improvements needed to make residents' units meet the legal requirements for registration as child care facilities.

The Rainier Vista rent incentives plan is built around flat rents that increase every two years until they reach local market rates. The plan, which also features an interest-bearing escrow account, is designed to create self-sufficient families who have the option of remaining at Rainier Vista or moving to a location outside the development. •

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stand to benefit public housing residents as well as other low-income families. However, depending on such factors as the size of a resident's family, full-time work may not pay much more than part-time work. Furthermore, modest wage progression may even reduce net income, particularly if it requires high unsubsidized expenditures for child care and it results in ineligibility for TANF, reductions in Food Stamps, reductions in EITC payments, and an increase in rent.

Jobs-Plus incentives

When the demonstration's designers originally formulated the Jobs-Plus approach — prior to passage of the TANF legislation — they envisioned a two-part strategy for financial incentives: (1) Housing authorities would reform rent rules to slow the rise in rent that normally follows an increase in a household's income, and (2) welfare departments would modify their grant calculation rules so that residents could keep more of their welfare grants when their earnings increased. As it turned out, welfare departments did not agree to the second part of this plan. They had already included new financial incentives in their TANF plans, and welfare department representatives and others in the Jobs-Plus collaboratives were reluctant to press policymakers to take on the complicated political effort of securing waivers under TANF for special Jobs-Plus incentives. Consequently, the sites' incentives strategies are limited almost entirely to rent reform.

To encourage the housing authorities to develop and test bold new rent incentives, HUD, drawing on special legislative authority, waived existing rent rules. Those rules require residents to pay 30 percent of their household's countable income in rent (that is, income after certain exclusions are applied), up to a maximum or ceiling rent pegged to the cost of operating a unit of housing. Under Jobs-Plus, residents would pay less of their overall income in rent. The housing authority would also benefit, collecting more rent as long as (1) the number of residents working increased substantially and (2) working residents paid more rent than when they did not work. Rent revenues would drop, however, if the rent reductions resulted only in lowering the payments of residents *already* employed.

Recognizing that few housing authorities would be willing to incur this risk, HUD agreed to hold the housing authorities harmless for the extra costs incurred by experimenting with new rent policies for Jobs-Plus that HUD approved. Issues arose, however, between HUD and the Congressional committee that oversees HUD's total departmental budget over how to cover these costs (though not over the hold-harmless concept), leading to several months of negotiations and, consequently, delays in the sites' ability to finalize and implement their incentive plans. The funding problem was eventually solved, and a final agreement between Congress and HUD was reached in May 1999. Meanwhile, St. Paul had begun implementing the first stage of its incentives plan at the end of 1998 and was prepared to absorb the costs of the rent reductions directly. Baltimore and Seattle considered a similar policy. This testifies to the importance sites ascribed to this aspect of the Jobs-Plus model.

Generally, the sites' plans for Jobs-Plus financial incentives encompass three approaches:

- **Earnings disregards.** Under this approach, the amount of a household's earnings included as countable income is reduced. Thus, rent (calculated at 30 percent of countable income) is lower than it otherwise would be. Cleveland and St. Paul incorporate this approach, beginning with a 75 percent and 100 percent earnings disregard, respectively, as the first stage of their incentives plan. This will be followed in subsequent years by disregards or other, less generous incentives.

• **Flat rents.** Versions of this approach are part of the Dayton, Los Angeles, and Seattle plans and most closely approximate the way the unsubsidized rental market works: A household pays a fixed rent, which does not increase as its earnings rise. (In Dayton and Seattle, the plan includes a series of flat rents or rent steps that increase over a period of years. Seattle's flat rent will reach market rate levels by the end of the demonstration.) For families with extremely low incomes, even a modest flat rent may be unaffordable. The sites using this approach have therefore combined it with certain hardship exemption policies or the option of paying 30 percent of the household's income in rent if that would yield a rent lower than the flat rent.

• **Reductions in the proportion of income paid in rent.** Another option, selected by two sites, is a reduction below the traditional 30 percent of the percentage of countable income used to calculate rent. Both the Baltimore and Chattanooga sites have adopted a plan that sets rent at 20 percent of a household's income, coupled with a lower-than-normal ceiling rent. In fact, Chattanooga's plan starts with a 16-month phase-in, when rent is calculated at 10 percent of income. When residents significantly increase their wages, their rent increases until it reaches the ceiling level. At this point (which may not occur until wages exceed $9 per hour), the rent structure can be thought of as similar to a flat rent, which will not change as a household's income continues to grow. Cleveland also intends to adopt this strategy (at 25 percent of income) as the final phase of a plan that begins with an earnings disregard.

The chart on page 51 illustrates how Jobs-Plus incentives would affect the after-rent net income of a sample of residents in three cities, after taking into account their major sources of income and work-related costs (see page 47). The chart shows, under different employment scenarios, what a household's net income would be before (gray bars) and after (red bars) the Jobs-Plus incentives were applied. The calculations assume that the residents use all available incentives. Even without the Jobs-Plus incentives (gray bars), working part time (20 hours per week) would yield more net income than not working, and working full time (40 hours per week) would yield more net income than working part time.[3] The red bars show, however, that the Jobs-Plus incentives increase the value of working part time, full time, or both.

In addition to changing the way rents are calculated, the sites' Jobs-Plus work incentive plans include other attractive features. For example, three sites (Cleveland, Los Angeles, and Seattle) will offer escrow savings accounts in which the public housing authority deposits a portion of working residents' rent payments into an interest-bearing savings account the residents can access in the future; two (Los Angeles and St. Paul) have developed rent credit systems that enable working residents to accumulate points that can be applied toward rent; two offer "bonuses" to steadily working residents — one month of free rent per year (Los Angeles) or an exemption from paying excess utilities (Chattanooga); and one (Chattanooga) exempts from rent calculations the earnings of adults under 24 years of age. In one site (Dayton), the public housing authority intends to purchase

3. In this example, a Baltimore resident working part time or full time at $7 per hour would be earning too much money to remain eligible for welfare. However, because the welfare grant is not large, part-time earnings alone at this wage rate would more than offset the loss of the grant. The continued receipt of Food Stamps and the EITC would also help make it pay to work rather than not work. Similar residents working part time or full time in Los Angeles and St. Paul, where welfare grants and eligibility thresholds are higher, would continue receiving a grant (although at a reduced level) until reaching the time limit on benefits, and this opportunity to combine work and welfare would contribute to the payoff that residents in those cities would get from working.

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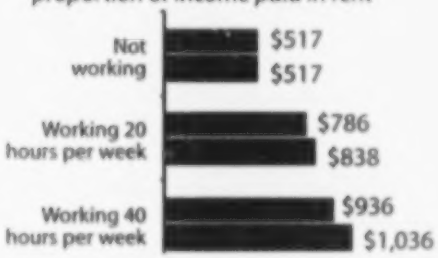
JOBS-PLUS FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

Changes in welfare policies, the EITC, and other factors can make it pay to work, even without Jobs-Plus, but Jobs-Plus makes work pay even more.

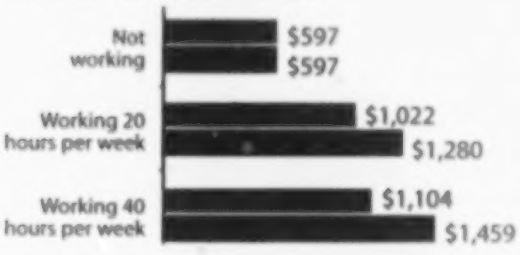
Net Income per Month After Rent for a Single Parent with Two Children Who Earns $7 per Hour and Uses Paid Child Care

Baltimore: *Effects of reducing to 20 percent the proportion of income paid in rent*



Los Angeles: *Effects of a flat rent (Phase 2 of the Los Angeles plan)*

St. Paul: *Effects of a generous earnings disregard (Phase 1 of the St. Paul plan)*



transitional group health coverage for residents who lose health benefits when they go to work. Other sites will offer access to free bus passes for those who become employed.

Enhancing residents' knowledge of existing benefits

Welfare recipients and other low-income people are often not fully aware of the financial work incentives available to them, such as earnings disregards available under TANF, assistance with the cost of child care and Medicaid that welfare recipients can continue to receive after leaving welfare, child care disregards under public housing rent rules, and the EITC. Thus, each Jobs-Plus site will develop an information or "marketing" strategy to help residents understand and take full advantage of these incentives and the incentives available to them through Jobs-Plus.[4] Baltimore, for example, will offer residents information sessions on the EITC and on-site assistance in applying for it. Seattle has already provided free tax preparation services to residents that include explaining the EITC.

Financial incentives as a Jobs-Plus recruiting tool

The collaboratives view the Jobs-Plus incentives as a powerful recruiting tool, and they require residents to participate in other Jobs-Plus activities, at least to some extent, in order to become eligible for the new rent incentives.

Nationally, rent reform continues to be of great interest to public housing authorities and

4. The gray bars in the chart would be shorter — and the Jobs-Plus incentives relatively larger — for residents who did not fully use the incentives available even without Jobs-Plus, such as the EITC.

residents alike. Moreover, as already noted, the 1998 housing law requires housing authorities to introduce certain new rent policies that are more favorable for working families. Thus, the Jobs-Plus sites' experiences in designing and implementing rent incentives are relevant to housing policy more broadly. MDRC plans to issue a special report on this topic.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR WORK

The third component of Jobs-Plus aims to increase "community support for work" among and on behalf of residents by (1) *strengthening residents' social networks* in ways that support and promote work and (2) *changing institutions* to support work better. As discussed in Chapter 1, the assumptions are that many public housing residents (like residents in high-poverty neighborhoods in general) are likely to be isolated from the kinds of informal job information and referral networks through which other members of society learn about and get access to employment opportunities; that they live in an environment that does not actively encourage work, facilitate work, or accurately communicate the benefits of working; and that they face institutional impediments that add to the burden of working.

Typical welfare-to-work and job training programs do little to address these problems of social capital. Consequently, the community support for work component for Jobs-Plus promises to be one of the program's most innovative features. However, the concept itself is imprecise, and it is no surprise that the sites chose to design and implement the other components of Jobs-Plus first. After those other components take shape, community support for work efforts can be linked to them, rather than stand alone. Each site has already taken some small steps to develop this component, but much bigger strides are anticipated in the near future.

Strengthening social networks to support work

New and strengthened social networks could be sources of information about work opportunities; help in understanding work incentives and welfare reform; encouragement to begin or continue working; assistance in solving practical, personal, or interpersonal problems that can impede steady work; assistance in coping with the psychological stresses of going to work; and help in meeting family obligations, given the constraints on one's time and availability that a job imposes (see page 53).

Hiring residents to fill certain paid positions in the Jobs-Plus program (for example, outreach worker, case manager, or soft-skills training provider) can also be viewed as a form of community support for work. At the very least, it means that the informal social networks within the development will now include people who, because of their affiliation with the program, are knowledgeable about employment and training opportunities, the availability of child care assistance and other social services, possible job openings, and so on. Informal encounters between these residents and their neighbors might also lead quite naturally to talk about work-related opportunities and supports, thus helping to spread the word about Jobs-Plus and, perhaps, reinforcing the value and feasibility of work in the process.

A FEW WAYS TO STRENGTHEN SOCIAL NETWORKS TO SUPPORT WORK

Establishing peer support groups among residents to share knowledge about work opportunities and provide support and guidance when problems arise on the job.

Having a small group of residents become a resource for clarifying and reinforcing program information and "messages" about the value of work and about the services and financial incentives Jobs-Plus offers.

Developing informal networks or cooperatives for child care assistance, especially to provide emergency child care (for example, when a child becomes ill or the regular provider is unavailable), cover evening or weekend work shifts when other child care options may be difficult to find, or cover brief periods before and after school.

Developing informal networks or cooperatives to help residents cope with everyday household responsibilities that can become more difficult to manage when working, such as grocery shopping, running other errands, and being available for service calls when apartment or appliance repairs need to be made.

Connecting residents with representatives of community institutions — such as churches, social service agencies, social clubs, and businesses — and getting those institutions to become resources for work-related assistance such as mentorships and information about job opportunities.

Changing institutions to support work

The program will also try to change a variety of institutional conditions that make it difficult for residents to work. These barriers may include, for example, lack of evening public transportation service within the neighborhood where the development is located, which could foreclose some job opportunities; the absence of a "safe corridor" from the development to the bus stop, which could discourage job-taking that requires the use of buses; lack of nearby grocery stores that stay open late; or lack of after-school programs that can provide a safe environment for residents' children until they return home from work.

Improvements might be made through negotiations with the transit authority (to change bus schedules or bus stop locations) or grocery stores (for some later hours). Transportation might be arranged to stores that already stay open later. After-school programs might be established at the development or in local schools or community centers to serve residents of the Jobs-Plus developments.

Efforts to date

Efforts to organize peer support groups are among the most common steps taken so far. For instance, in Cleveland, support groups will be organized around specific needs shared by clusters of residents. One group will be made up of participants in GED (high school equivalency) classes and will aim to promote their mutual support for completing the class, passing the GED test, and moving into the workforce. In addition, a child care provider support group is being formed among residents who recently became certified as in-home daycare providers. Modeling their efforts on a similar group in Chattanooga, the participating residents have agreed to share ideas on issues that arise in providing child care services, to work jointly to secure liability insurance, and to help provide coverage for their clients when a member of the group is ill or has another emer-

gency. Another group is being formed by residents who work for the same employer to help one another master new skills and adjust to stresses they all experience at the workplace. In Los Angeles, job clubs that function as employment support groups are envisioned.

In all the sites, Jobs-Plus community organizers and outreach workers are starting to promote participation and work among residents. By helping to create a strong set of "messages" that encourage work, raise residents' expectations, and aggressively get out the word on the new opportunities Jobs-Plus is bringing to the communities, the sites hope to create a new social environment within public housing in which the theme of work is pervasive and inescapable.

Other residents, too, play an important role in delivering these messages. Resident advisory councils have begun to promote Jobs-Plus — and its employment goals — in their regular meetings, which all residents are invited to attend. Community events sponsored by Jobs-Plus, often in partnership with the resident advisory councils, are another vehicle for getting the word out. The sites, for example, have sponsored celebrations to mark the opening of the Jobs-Plus offices and resource centers, and many have organized celebrations of important resident achievements, such as completing training programs and finding jobs. It has become a growing practice to publicize residents' employment successes by posting word of them on a wall in the Jobs-Plus offices or resource centers.

As previously discussed, all sites have hired or are planning to hire residents for some Jobs-Plus positions. Baltimore has gone the furthest by hiring a number of residents for Jobs-Plus and out-stationing them at several of the agencies serving Jobs-Plus participants. This not only gives residents an opportunity to work outside the Jobs-Plus development, but also offers them a special vantage point from which to support and encourage other residents' use of the agencies' services. It is hoped that as Jobs-Plus achieves more visibility and prominence, its messages will be conveyed to other residents not just by those who are program staff members, but also more broadly among residents, from neighbor to neighbor.

As already noted, several sites have been exploring the option of instituting a formalized system of bartering services among residents in Jobs-Plus, in cooperation with the Time Dollar Institute. The intent is to make it easier for residents to work on a steady basis and to foster a stronger sense of community.

Some sites hope to use the Jobs-Plus financial incentives to encourage supportive efforts from residents who themselves, because of age or disability, may not be able to work. Seattle, for example, is hoping to offer rent reductions of up to $50 per month to such residents who volunteer to help other residents in Jobs-Plus (by babysitting, leading support groups, becoming mentors, and so on). Dayton plans to offer rent credits of up to $599 per year to residents who cannot work but volunteer for community service.

A small but noteworthy example of "institutional" community support for work is under consideration in Seattle and already in place in St. Paul. In Seattle, Jobs-Plus staff and the housing authority have begun discussing the possibility of conducting annual rent reviews at night and on weekends so that working recipients will not have to miss work in order to attend these sessions, which are a requirement for continuing to live in public housing. Instituting this change becomes complicated because it involves negotiating with the housing authority staff's labor union and solving other logistical problems. But by trying

to accommodate the lifestyles of working people in this way, the housing authority would both avoid interfering with some residents' jobs and reinforce the Jobs-Plus message of the centrality of work. Seattle's "paperwork nights" at the Jobs-Plus resource center may help to send a similar message. In general, providing employment-related services on site and at convenient times is another important institutional change to support work.

Over the coming year, the sites' attention to the community support for work component will increase substantially.

NEXT STEPS

This document has shown that active local partnerships are already emerging in the sites, and that considerable progress is being made in designing and implementing a Jobs-Plus program. Nonetheless, major challenges lie ahead, and success is far from assured. Will true partnerships take shape and be sustained, with public housing authorities, welfare departments, the workforce development system, and other agencies all feeling a stake in the success of Jobs-Plus? Will residents exert a powerful influence? Can the sites implement new services, incentives, and supports at saturation levels? Will large numbers of residents become involved with Jobs-Plus and take advantage of these opportunities? Will the program greatly increase their employment and earnings, as hoped? And, if so, will that help make public housing communities better places in which to live?

MDRC will attempt to answer these and other questions in future reports as the Jobs-Plus demonstration unfolds. One report will explore in greater depth the sites' experiences in building Jobs-Plus collaboratives. Another will examine the design and early implementation of new financial incentives. Others will more closely examine the implementation of all the program components as a package, and how residents are responding to the new opportunities Jobs-Plus is creating for them. Still others will present findings based on the unusually rich quantitative data collected through the initial survey of residents. The first findings on Jobs-Plus's effects on residents' employment, earnings, welfare receipt, and other outcomes are expected to be available in the year 2000, and the final report on the demonstration is currently scheduled to be completed in 2003.

As they accumulate, the findings on Jobs-Plus are expected to offer lessons broadly relevant to the continuing national debate over how best to improve public housing. But the demonstration's knowledge development agenda is relevant well beyond the public housing arena. Lessons on the program's innovative services, incentives, and supports for work — and on potential links between employment and community-building and revitalization — all promise to inform other national and local efforts to enhance the self-sufficiency and quality of life of low-income people and the communities in which they live.

Appendix

Evaluating Jobs-Plus

THE Jobs-Plus demonstration includes plans for a comprehensive evaluation to assess the success of this enormously challenging project. The study will examine the implementation, impacts (effects), costs, and cost-effectiveness of Jobs-Plus.[1] The review of the sites' experiences presented in this document is just the beginning of that effort. This Appendix provides an overview of the scope and methods of the larger evaluation plan.

THE PROGRAM'S IMPLEMENTATION AND THE ROLE OF COLLABORATION

Given the central role of collaboration in Jobs-Plus, an important goal of the implementation research is to determine, in the end, whether that approach was a good one. In making this assessment, the evaluation will consider the extent to which the sites created a decisionmaking structure and process that was *inclusive* (that is, provided opportunities for the variety of partners, not just the housing authority, to influence the design and implementation of the program) and *productive* (that is, could make decisions and "get things done"), and showed evidence of *service integration* (that is, institutions working together in new ways to deliver services to their common clientele). Of particular interest is whether residents play a significant role in the decisionmaking process, as intended, and whether the welfare and workforce development systems acquire a sense of ownership over the program, despite the fact that the housing authority functions as the lead agency. An important objective of this analysis is to understand the trade-offs of the different approaches to collaboration and whether enduring changes in the relationships among key institutions result.

The research will describe in detail the kinds of employment and training services, financial incentives, and community supports for work that the sites implemented and — importantly — why they chose different approaches (because of underlying theories, special opportunities and circumstances, or other reasons).

One of the biggest challenges, of course, will be implementing Jobs-Plus as a saturation initiative and on a large scale. It is thus important to explore such questions as: Do the sites supply services, incentives, and supports to all working-age residents in each development and get most residents to take advantage of them? Is this done equally well across the diverse settings and for the diverse populations in the demonstration? Is this goal feasible and realistic? What conditions make successful implementation of a large-scale saturation initiative easier or harder to achieve?

The implementation study will rely heavily on qualitative data collected by part-time, locally based field researchers working under the direction of the New York-based research staff. Survey and other data will be used to measure residents' involvement in and perceptions of the program. All this information will be essential, ultimately, for understanding why Jobs-Plus does or does not produce large increases in residents' employment and earnings, and whether some ways of structuring and operating the program are better than others.

1. See Bloom (1996) and Riccio (1998) for detailed discussions of the Jobs-Plus research design.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF JOBS-PLUS

Does Jobs-Plus *cause* residents' employment and earnings to increase, their use of welfare to decline, and their quality of life to improve? That is the central question of the impact analysis, which will attempt to estimate the effects of Jobs-Plus on key employment outcomes and on a variety of welfare, quality of life, and other outcome measures. This will not be easy, especially because the saturation and place-based nature of the demonstration make it impossible to use a traditional controlled experiment, a method widely viewed as the most credible way of determining a program's effectiveness. In such an experiment — much like a clinical trial in the medical field to test the effects of a new drug — individuals are randomly assigned to either a program group, which receives the new intervention or treatment, or a control group, which does not. The effect — or "impact" — is the difference between the groups on an outcome measure of interest, such as average earnings. An employment program, for example, would be said to be effective if the average earnings of the program group were higher than the average earnings of the control group.

It is not possible to use this methodology to test the effects, or impacts, of Jobs-Plus because the program's services, incentives, and supports for work are targeted toward all working-age residents at each development. This makes it impossible to create a randomly selected control group left "untouched" by the program. The evaluation must therefore rely on an alternative approach.

The approach being used involves randomly assigning *entire housing developments*, rather than individual residents, to either a program or control group, coupled with an interrupted time-series analysis of administrative records (see page 58). MDRC randomly chose one of several qualifying developments to be the Jobs-Plus development in each city and one or (more often) two to be the comparison developments.[2] As a condition of participating in the demonstration, the public housing authorities had to agree not to implement activities like those provided as part of Jobs-Plus or to launch other major employment initiatives in the comparison sites before 2003.

This strategy for testing the impacts of Jobs-Plus is unique among evaluations of public housing employment programs and of comprehensive community initiatives. Although not as robust a research design as a social experiment involving the random assignment of individuals, it holds the potential to supply unusually reliable evidence of the impacts of a place-based intervention.[3]

The data for much of this analysis will come largely from administrative records on employment, earnings, welfare, and Food Stamps. But these are not the only outcomes that matter. Indeed, an underlying assumption behind Jobs-Plus, as discussed in Chapter 2, is that big increases in employment and earnings can lead to improvements in residents' quality of life. Therefore, to test this hypothesis, the evaluation is using a survey of residents in the Jobs-Plus and comparison developments to measure changes over time in how they view living in their development, their material well-being, their physical health and psychosocial well-being, the well-being of their children, their victimization and fear of crime, and other important indicators.

Although the goal of submitting Jobs-Plus to a rigorous impact assessment has been an important

2. To broaden the racial and ethnic composition of the Los Angeles sample, Imperial Courts was recruited as a Jobs-Plus development, but it was not chosen randomly.

3. See Hollister and Hill (1995) and Rossi (1999) for discussions of the difficulty of evaluating community-wide initiatives.

THE DESIGN OF THE JOBS-PLUS IMPACT ANALYSIS

Random assignment of housing developments

In each city, several developments roughly similar in terms of the demographic characteristics of their populations were identified. Through a random process, one of these developments was selected to be the Jobs-Plus site, and one or (more often) two were selected to be comparison developments. This random allocation was an attempt to avoid a type of selection bias that would have resulted if MDRC had systematically picked the "best" developments for Jobs-Plus.

Interrupted time-series analysis

Rather than simply compare employment and other outcomes across the Jobs-Plus and comparison developments, the analysis will compare long-term outcome *trends* in the developments. In particular, it will measure trends in residents' employment, earnings, welfare payments, and Food Stamp receipt, using administrative records for more than 8,000 families. It will measure these trends over a period beginning five years prior to the start of Jobs-Plus and ending about five years after the start date. A finding that the employment trends grow *substantially* more positive within a Jobs-Plus development after the introduction of the program, and that the change in trends is much larger than in the comparison development(s), will provide important evidence of Jobs-Plus's effectiveness.

Banking on big differences

In studies where small or modest impacts matter from a policy standpoint, it is important to measure them with considerable precision. In that situation, random assignment of individuals to program and control groups is particularly advantageous. The explicit goal of Jobs-Plus is to produce *large* impacts, however, and a less robust research design may be sufficient for concluding that if the estimated impacts are large, the program is indeed making a difference.

part of the research agenda from the start, the demonstration's designers have not assumed that such a test would be feasible or even warranted. The quality of the programs that emerge in the field, the sites' progress in implementing all three Jobs-Plus components, their prospects for operating the program at a saturation level, the ability of the sites to provide access to the needed data, judgments about the feasibility and reliability of the methodology envisioned for the impact analysis, the continuing suitability of the comparison developments for the analysis, and budget considerations will all be taken into account in deciding whether to pursue the impact research in all seven sites, a subset of them, or not at all. But if it were deemed feasible, that research would be an important milestone in the ongoing quest for rigorous evaluations of the effectiveness of community initiatives.

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77

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Los Angeles's Jobs-First GAIN Program

An evaluation of Los Angeles's refocused GAIN (welfare-to-work) program, which emphasizes rapid employment. This is the first in-depth study of a full-scale "work first" program in one of the nation's largest urban areas.

Changing to a Work First Strategy: Lessons from Los Angeles County's GAIN Program for Welfare Recipients. 1997. Evan Weissman.

The Los Angeles Jobs-First GAIN Evaluation: Preliminary Findings on Participation Patterns and First-Year Impacts. 1998. Stephen Freedman, Marisa Mitchell, David Navarro.

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Teen Parents on Welfare

Ohio's LEAP Program

An evaluation of Ohio's Learning, Earning, and Parenting (LEAP) Program, which uses financial incentives to encourage teenage parents on welfare to stay in or return to school.

LEAP: Final Report on Ohio's Welfare Initiative to Improve School Attendance Among Teenage Parents. 1997. Johannes Bos, Veronica Fellerath.

New Chance Demonstration

A test of a comprehensive program of services that seeks to improve the economic status and general well-being of a group of highly disadvantaged young women and their children.

New Chance: Final Report on a Comprehensive Program for Young Mothers in Poverty and Their Children. 1997. Janet Quint, Johannes Bos, Denise Polit.

Parenting Behavior in a Sample of Young Mothers in Poverty: Results of the New Chance Observational Study. 1998. Martha Zaslow, Carolyn Eldred, editors.

Focusing on Fathers

Parents' Fair Share Demonstration

A demonstration for unemployed noncustodial parents (usually fathers) of children on welfare. PFS aims to improve the men's employment and earnings, reduce child poverty by increasing child support payments, and assist the fathers in playing a broader constructive role in their children's lives.

Low-Income Parents and the Parents' Fair Share Demonstration. 1996. Earl Johnson, Fred Doolittle.

Working with Low-Income Cases: Lessons for the Child Support Enforcement System from Parents' Fair Share. 1998. Fred Doolittle, Suzanne Lynn.

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Can They All Work? A Study of the Employment Potential of Welfare Recipients in a Welfare-to-Work Program. 1995. James Riccio, Stephen Freedman.

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EDUCATION REFORM

School-to-Work Project

A study of innovative programs that help students make the transition from school to work or careers.

Home-Grown Lessons: Innovative Programs Linking School and Work (Jossey-Bass Publishers). 1995. Edward Pauly, Hilary Kopp, Joshua Haimson.

Home-Grown Progress: The Evolution of Innovative School-to-Work Programs. 1997. Rachel Pedraza, Edward Pauly, Hilary Kopp.

Career Academies

The largest and most comprehensive evaluation of a school-to-work initiative, this 10-site study examines a promising approach to high school restructuring and the school-to-work transition.

Career Academies: Early Implementation Lessons from a 10-Site Evaluation. 1996. James Kemple, JoAnn Leah Rock.

Career Academies: Communities of Support for Students and Teachers — Emerging Findings from a 10-Site Evaluation. 1997. James Kemple.

Career Academies: Building Career Awareness and Work-Based Learning Activities Through Employer Partnerships. 1999. James Kemple, Susan Poglinco, Jason Snipes.

Project Transition

A demonstration program that tested a combination of school-based strategies to facilitate students' transition from middle school to high school.

Project Transition: Testing an Intervention to Help High School Freshmen Succeed. 1999. Janet Quint, Cynthia Miller, Jennifer Pastor, Rachel Cytron.

MDRC WORKING PAPERS ON RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A new series of papers that explore alternative methods of examining the implementation and impacts of programs and policies.

Building a Convincing Test of a Public Housing Employment Program Using Non-Experimental Methods: Planning for the Jobs-Plus Demonstration. 1999. Howard Bloom.

Estimating Program Impacts on Student Achievement Using "Short" Interrupted Time Series. 1999. Howard Bloom.

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MDRC's current projects focus on welfare and economic security, education, and employment and community initiatives. Complementing our evaluations of a wide range of welfare reforms are new studies of supports for the working poor and emerging analyses of how programs affect children's development and their families' well-being. In the field of education, we are testing reforms aimed at improving the performance of public schools, especially in urban areas. Finally, our community projects are using innovative approaches to increase employment in low-income neighborhoods.

Our projects are a mix of demonstrations — field tests of promising program models — and evaluations of government and community initiatives, and we employ a wide range of methods such as large-scale studies to determine a program's effects, surveys, case studies, and ethnographies of individuals and families. We share the findings and lessons from our work — including best practices for program operators — with a broad audience within the policy and practitioner community, as well as the general public and the media.

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